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# THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

J. P. CHRISTENSEN

# THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

WITH

## A CHRISTIAN APPLICATION TO PRESENT CONDITIONS

BY

HENRY SLOANE COFFIN

MINISTER IN THE MADISON AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, AND ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR IN THE UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, NEW YORK CITY

*Omnis consummationis vidi finem; latum mandatum tuum nimis.*
Psalm. cxviii (119): 96 Vulgate

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TO

EDWARD S. HARKNESS

*Non est vera amicitia, nisi cum eam Tu agglutinas inter inhærentes Tibi.*

Augustine, *Conf.* 4:iv.

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# PREFACE

The outbreak of the Great War in the summer of 1914 seemed to many to set us abruptly in the midst of another age. We had come to think of ourselves as living in an earth which, with all its selfishness, was slowly but surely responding to the touch of the Spirit of Christ. Americans looked upon the huge armaments of Europe as absurd anachronisms; the growth of intelligence and the spread of Christian ideals had made a conflict between the great powers unthinkable. We were startled and appalled to find ourselves suddenly thrust back into a day of pagan horrors. The folly of the strife bewildered us: whither had wisdom flown? Its iniquity filled us with loathing: had righteousness been overthrown? We were driven to ask ourselves afresh what was wisdom and what was righteousness. The moral bases of life were re-examined; the primary ethical ideals of Christianity were scanned with a new interest. We were ready to sit at Christ's feet and learn of Him, and to go with Him

to the wisdom He commended in "them of old time." A restatement of the Ten Commandments seemed timely; their application an urgent necessity.

The following sermons were preached in the autumn and winter of 1914-1915. They were printed in pamphlet form at the request of those who heard them, and found a rapid distribution; they are now given to a wider public in the hope that they may lead to a more eager and resolute search after the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.

July, 1915.

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# THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

# THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

## THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

Exodus xx:3: *"Thou shalt have no other gods before Me."*

Were this commandment to be phrased today, it might read: "Thou shalt have at least one God." Our danger apparently lies not in worshipping too many deities, but in worshipping none at all. There are numbers of men and women who seem to look up to nothing. Instead of praying, they plan; instead of aspiring to a perfection on high, they cherish their own ideals; instead of trusting with childlike dependence to a Power outside themselves, they resolutely push their own way; instead of opening their spirits to intercourse with Another, they think hard; instead of casting their burden upon Him, they throw it over their own shoulders. In a brilliant essay, Sainte Beuve pictures the great preacher, Bossuet, as seeking "something that may awaken in the

human heart that terrible thought of seeing nothing above itself." The difficulty with many people is not in finding some rock that is higher than they, to which to lead them; but to induce them to raise their eyes to any point on the rock loftier than themselves. Certain minds have a fatal faculty for reducing everything and every one to their own level. They are incapable of seeing in men vastly better than themselves the virtues in which these excel them; but they quickly detect the faults akin to their own. Firm in their complacency, they look out on the world with eyes slightly downcast, prepared to find all objects in their field of vision beneath them. And whatever is above remains out of their sight. The only hope for them is that some circumstance will lay them flat on their backs in utter helplessness, and compel them to look up; then, perhaps, a new world will swim within their ken, the world of things high and lofty, the mountain-tops and the stars and the overarching sky,—the age-old symbols of God.

Most men are fortunately not quite so self-assured and self-satisfied. They look out and up; and awesome sights greet their eyes.

"There are moments," says Victor Hugo, "when, whatever the attitude of the body, the soul is on its knees." Truth commands their loyalty; justice enlists their conscience; beauty captivates their spirits; love masters their hearts. They discover what it is to surrender themselves to the lordship of something they cannot but obey. In that experience, whether or not they call the object of their devotion "God," religion is born.

"What means it," asks Martin Luther, "to have a God?" and replies, "Whatever thy heart clings to and relies upon, that is properly thy God." And it is just here that we moderns find ourselves in peril of the old polytheism, against which this First Commandment is a solemn warning. Not to speak of the common idolatry of trust in people,—such idolatry as Luther himself once acknowledged when he said, "I expect more goodness from Kate, my wife, and Philip Melancthon, and from my other friends, than from my sweet and blessed Saviour,"—or of the crude trust in dollars, we are polytheists in this, that we rely upon different things in different circumstances, or in different spheres of our life; so

that unconsciously we bring back under other names, or rather unnamed, the many deities of the heathen credulity.

Many of us, for instance, have one god for the hearth and another for the market-place. We confide our homes to love. We trust wife or husband utterly, because love binds them to us. We expect parents and children to fulfil their duties to one another, to hold fast to each other through all the years their lives are spared, because this household deity, affection, can be depended on. And we worship the domestic god with appropriate rites. He has his sacraments of the kiss and the remembered personal festivals. He has his ten commandments,—ten reduced to one, for love is the fulfilling of his law. And he possesses our whole-hearted allegiance; what love cannot do with wife or husband, nothing else can accomplish; when love fails with children or with parents, there is naught stronger or wiser to fall back upon. And love proves itself trustworthy; it seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, and never faileth.

But when we close the door of our home and go out into the world of business, we seem to have passed into a realm where some other divinity bears sway. Instead of looking with trust at those with whom we trade, we eye them sharply. Instead of depending upon mutual affection to keep us and those with whom we have dealings faithful to our obligations, we rely on self-interest. Men will do business with us and we with them, so long as it is profitable, and no longer. The tie which unites lives in this sphere is selfishness; so long as men's interests lie in the same direction, they pull together; the instant their interests clash, they pull apart. And this god of the market-place, too, has his appropriate rites. His revered highpriests are the financially powerful; his sacraments are business contracts, enforceable by the strong hand of law; his ten commandments are the so-called "rules of the game," and they rest on the assumption that every man is for himself first, last and always. The god of the hearth is love; the god of the market-place is self-interest. Family is family, business is business; and the ancient polytheism is with us still.

Or we have one god for the individual and another for society. The divinity of the individual is forgiving and redeeming, and his devotee must also forgive and try to redeem those who injure him. When we are wronged, we feel that our first duty is to rid our hearts of illwill and vindictiveness; and our next duty is to do all in our power for the man who has wronged us, that we may help him never to wrong another again. Our private deity requires us to love our enemies and do them good. We dare not ask him to pardon our sins, save as we pray, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." But the god of society is apparently a different being. When a man wrongs the community by committing a crime, the first duty of the community, in the name of its god, is to protect itself and imprison the offender. Its next is to try to pay him back for the harm he has done, apportioning a penalty to fit his offence: so many years for grand larceny, so many months for petty larceny; imprisonment for murder in the second degree, death for murder in the first. The god of forgiveness and redemption seemingly has no jurisdiction in the social

treatment of wrong, unless it be for very young or trivial offenders, whom we deal with by the probation system.

The deity of the individual is a god of justice. If some one injures him, he does not feel that he can give way to his resentment and attack the aggressor with knife or pistol, or proceed to take part of his possessions from him. He must carry his grievance to a duly constituted court, where it will be impartially heard; and he must abide by the decision of that court, whether his feelings are satisfied by its verdict or not. But the deity of a nation seems not to be this god of justice, but a god of force. If a nation is wronged, unless the wrong is of the most trifling kind, it refuses to have it tried by a tribunal. Its national honour justifies it in resorting to arms, and, if possible, compelling its assailant to cede it territory, or pay it an indemnity, or lose its independence altogether.

Or again, the god of one group or class often does not seem to them to be the god of some other group. A nation going to war asserts that its god and the god of its fathers will assure it victory, as though its enemies

and their fathers were under the protection of some lesser deity. A group of wealthy people will speak of the god who sanctions the ownership of property, and solemnly warns "Thou shalt not steal," when radical legislation threatens to take something from them, or strikers offer violence to their belongings; but they apparently think that some other deity sanctions the right of the labourer to his job and to a living wage. On the other hand, a group of working men will insist that the god of justice and of the future approves of their violent methods of obtaining their demands; and speak as if all his sympathy and tenderness were with them, while the capitalists against whom they are striving are under some outworn pagan god of property—a god of the past.

On every hand we find ourselves living not under one God, but under many. Whatever may be our nominal religion, we are practically polytheists, and as really polytheists as the crude savages who people the world with multitudes of discordant spirits. Our gods clash: the god of the hearth with the god of the shop; the god of persons with the god of nations;

the god of Russians with the god of Germans; the god of property with the god of humanity. There is as much war among our deities as among the quarrelling Olympians of Homer, or the contending divinities of Ammon and Moab, of Philistia and Judah.

The baneful result of many gods is to rob life of its unity. We are not *whole* men with natures all of one piece, but "things of shreds and patches," crazy-quilt natures, mixtures of half a dozen species of Dr. Jekyll with as many varieties of Mr. Hyde. His wife and children know one Zacchaeus—kindly, genial, devoted; those who do business with the farmer of taxes in the city of Jericho are familiar with quite another Zacchaeus—shrewd, grasping, hard. His personal friends know one Zacchaeus; the community which considers him a social outcast knows another. That on which he depends, his god, in these different relations, makes him now this, now that, now something else—a composite Zacchaeus. Eli and young Saul and David know and dearly love one Samuel; Agag and the Philistines know a very different Samuel. This devout prophet thought he believed in one God; but

he did not yet know that the God of Israel was also the God of Philistia, so he devoutly hewed Agag in pieces before Jehovah in Gilgal. The deity on whom we rely and after whom we fashion ourselves in our relations with our friends—the deity of respect and sympathy and willing service—is seldom the deity on whom we depend and whom we imitate in our office, or as patriots when we think of our country's relation with Mexico or Japan. Many gods make us many unlike men in one disunited and discordant personality. Our name is legion, for we are many.

No doubt most of us have taken for granted that if there be a God at all, there cannot be more than one. We may have felt ourselves tempted to atheism or to agnosticism, but hardly to polytheism. But is the belief in one God we have inherited from Israel really a truer explanation of the facts of life than the belief in gods many, which was held by peoples so intelligent as Greeks and Romans?

For example, is it clear that the God of our hearts is also the God of nature? There is nothing about which we feel more intensely than the distinction between right and wrong;

right we must love and wrong we must hate; but nature seems to have nothing akin to our consciences.

In Thomas Hardy's tragic novel, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles,* after his heroine's moral downfall, he concludes a chapter with this picture: "Walking among the sleeping birds in the hedges, watching the skipping rabbits on a moonlit warren, or standing under a pheasant-laden bough, she looked upon herself as a figure of Guilt intruding into the haunts of Innocence. But all the while she was making a distinction where there was no difference. Feeling herself in antagonism, she was quite in accord. She had been made to break an accepted social law, but no law known to the environment in which she fancied herself such an anomaly." Was the God of her conscience, as Hardy appears to think, a moral hobgoblin by which she was terrified without reason? Is the God of conscience a small private divinity, while some great conscienceless Force dominates the world outside? Or is the whole structure and fabric of the universe shot through with righteousness?

Again, are we convinced that the God of

our homes, to whom we give the family name, "Our Father," is the Deity actually in control of the commercial affairs and the international contacts of men? Could He successfully conduct them, if we would let Him? Can the same Spirit, upon which we rely in our households, be confided in to direct aright these other spheres? Will Love work practically, and prove itself the dominant might in every part of this and of all other worlds?

The religious experience of mankind has certainly been against polytheism. Even in Greece and Rome, the more thoughtfully devout came to feel their way past the many gods to a mysterious One. Israel was led to discover that its Jehovah was no private Protector of its twelve tribes—

> "A god they pitted 'gainst a swarm
> Of neighbour gods less vast of arm"—

but the Lord of the whole earth. Believing souls discover that they can no more have several gods than several wives. One God, if they really come into fellowship with Him, claims them for Himself alone, and is jealous with love's jealousy. And He succeeds in so

completely engrossing their every capacity, that they have no unused remainders to devote to other divinities.

In William Morris' *Sir Galahad,* the knight is represented in an irreligious mood, "with no touch of awe upon him," when he is attracted by the ringing of a bell, and finds himself entering a chapel, where he sees,

"One sitting on the altar as a throne,
Whose face no man could say he did not know."

Instinctively Sir Galahad kneels,

"for he felt
The first time what a thing was perfect dread."

When God makes His own divine impression upon us in Jesus Christ, we experience such a perfect and complete abasement—our minds mastered by One who grips them as the final Truth, our consciences held by One who is to them their ideal of Right, our admiration called out by One who seems the altogether Lovely, our hearts kindled by One who sets them all aflame with love—our whole self goes out in such response to Him, that we have nothing left to give to another.

This old commandment did not read "There

*is* but one God." People might argue that proposition endlessly. It read: "Thou shalt *have* no other gods before Me." In having, in trusting this God, we find Him engrossing all the capacity for the Divine within us. We find as a matter of experience that we cannot trust God in Christ, without His drawing us to trust Him altogether. We are forced either to give Him our all, or nothing. We cannot serve Him with a fraction of ourselves; it requires as much as in us is to obey Him; and when He answers our obedience with His comradeship, He fills our every need and more. If Martin Luther is correct "that to have a God means to have something in which the heart puts all its trust," Jesus of Nazareth has the power to capture our entire trust, and to be the God who has us. We give Him our adoration, our confidence, our loyalty, and not a part but the whole of our soul's devotion.

But to worship Jesus as God seems to some minds to break this First Commandment: "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." There is a common form of stating the deity of Christ which leaves the Christian

with at least two gods—the Creator of the Universe and the Jesus of history. But that on which we rely and which we worship in the Father and the Son is the same divinity, is Christlike love. It is that which bows us in adoration before Jesus, when He stands at our side, a Man in all points like ourselves; it is that which we adore with Him in His God and Father, the Lord of heaven and earth. For us, as for Paul, "There is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and we through Him." We follow Jesus in placing the trust of our hearts utterly in One who is love, and we find that love made plain and embodied in the Jesus we follow. When we adore Jesus, we worship God in Him; when we pray to Jesus, we pray to God through Him. There is for us one God, and He is manifest to us fully in Christ.

And how all important it is that, having been mastered by the true God, we should come back to this first principle that we can have no other god beside. The only hope of lasting peace on earth is that all nations shall

so rely on Christlike love that they will allow nothing else to control their public policies. The only solution of our industrial conflicts is that all who have any part in the world's work,—investors, managers, working men and women—shall really believe in the Godship of Christlike love, and let this God lead them into His economic order of brotherly striving for the common enrichment of the whole household of His children. The only prospect of our becoming complete selves, whole men and women, lies in our loving this God with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind, all our strength, so that no fractions of our personalities pass out under the sway of other and alien ideals.

We said that God in Christ has the ability to claim and engross our all. That is true, provided we are willing to put our all into the life He is willing to share with us. Husband and wife can occupy each other's entire hearts; and they do, if each puts a whole self into their common life. But many married couples have very imperfectly shared interests; and in the unshared interest lies the peril of infidelity. Have we a purpose with which

God in Christ cannot sympathise? Has He a purpose into which we are not cordially entering? Look at Him, and keep looking at Him, as He opens His mind and heart to us in the life and cross of His Son, and is there not a love there for all mankind and for ourselves, which "demands our soul, our life, our all"?

# THE SECOND COMMANDMENT

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Exodus xx:4: *"Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image."*

This is a commandment for which we can easily discover a temporary justification. In the age of Moses and of Israel's great prophets, in a world full of image-worshippers, it is difficult to see how the spirituality of God could have been safeguarded except by a drastic prohibition against any likeness of anything in heaven, or earth, or sea. Pictorial art vastly enriches life; but if one must sacrifice either spiritual religion or sculpture and painting, there can be no question which is the more valuable to retain. As it is better for a man to forego the development of his nature altogether on some lines, rather than imperil his moral health; better for him (in Christ's words) "to enter into life maimed," rather than having two eyes and two hands to be wrecked in character; so it is better that life should be artistically impoverished than religiously degraded.

But in our age is this commandment needed? And in what sense? It is a sweeping prohibition of all painting and sculpture whatsoever; and many earnest Christians at different ages in the history of the Church have followed it, and have looked askance at devotees of art. Those who delighted most in beauty of form and colour have often slighted the beauty of holiness; and in protest those to whom righteousness has been the supreme end in life have looked with suspicion on the cult of loveliness. Some exceedingly conscientious and earnest epochs have been hideous; and on the other hand some of the most artistic periods in the world's history have been both immoral and undevout. There is a sincere confession in a sonnet which Michael Angelo wrote in his old age:—

Now hath my life across a stormy sea,
Like a frail bark, reached that wide port where all
Are bidden, ere the final reckoning fall
Of good and evil for eternity.
Now know I well how that fond phantasy
Which made my soul the worshipper and thrall
Of earthly art is vain; how criminal
Is that which all men seek unwillingly.
Those amorous thoughts which were so lightly dressed,

What are they when the double death is nigh?
The one I know for sure, the other dread.
Painting nor sculpture now can lull to rest
My soul, that turns to His great love on high,
Whose arms to clasp us on the cross were spread.

Art, made life's chief purpose, starves the soul; but to condemn art altogether is to starve another side of our nature. Thackeray has more than one bitter thrust at the current evangelical religion dominant in Britain and this country a generation ago because of its contentment with ugliness and its fear of aught which charmed with its beauty. He makes Major Dobbin say in *Vanity Fair,* "that for his part, every beauty of art and nature made him thankful as well as happy, and that the pleasure to be had in listening to fine music, as in looking at the stars in the sky or at a beautiful landscape or picture, was a benefit for which we might thank heaven as sincerely as for any other worldly blessing." To which Amelia utters some feeble objections based on the current religious ideas of the day.

We have moved a long way since then, and are happily more Christian. Our Lord's own keen appreciation of lovely sights and His

incomparable artistic skill in the one medium available to Him—language—must make us sympathetic with all who render life richer by chisel or brush. We cannot forget that all things fair are as truly reflections of God as all things true and just; that God is Righteousness and Truth and

"that Beauty
Which penetrates and clasps and fills the world."

We do not rightly worship Him with holiness alone, but in the beauty of holiness.

But granting that this commandment was far too sweeping, what shall we say of its narrower application to pictorial representations of Deity? William Blake once remarked: "There are three powers in man of conversing with Paradise—Poetry, Painting and Music." If we are to have intercourse with the Unhearable, the Unseeable, the Unfeelable, we must find some ways of intercommunication. If our spirits are to carry on commerce with God, we must discover means of transit by which He may send what He wills to us, and we what we wish to Him. Poetry, the making of thought-images, is one method.

And the Bible is throughout poetic in this sense that it employs picturesque words to make us see God. He is a Rock, a Shield, a Sun, a High Tower, a Home. Music, which, as Tiecke put it, "teaches us to feel feeling," is another method of setting us in contact with God. The Bible's prose is musical, and its rhythm affects us, as well as its imagery of thought; its poetical passages, while they are not rhymed, are marvellously musical, and lend themselves easily to use with voice and instrument, as in chants and anthems. Both poetry and music were freely enlisted by the Hebrews in the service of their faith. Why was it that they barred sculpture and painting?

A graven image, even to the crudest worshipper, is probably very seldom identified with his god; it is only a symbol of his god. There is a peril that the god and the symbol shall be confused; but it is a peril like that which Jesus took in instituting the Lord's Supper. Why should it be thought so much more dangerous to paint on canvas or carve a representation of Divinity than to draw a thought of God on the wall of the mind or grave an image of Him in the intellect? The

Christian Church very early discarded this Jewish commandment; there are rough drawings in the catacombs, and Christian artists of the most saintly and devout characters—a Fra Angelico for example—dedicated their lives to imaging the Divine. The chief artistic treasures of the Christian centuries are paintings which try to portray Biblical scenes or persons—Christ, the Virgin Mother, even God the Father. But from time to time there have been vigorous protests from spiritually minded men who have felt that these pictorial representations were an injury to real religion. One thinks of the Iconoclasts in Byzantium, the early Protestants who smashed the carved figures on the cathedrals of France and Holland, the Puritans who destroyed stained glass windows, reduced the architecture of their churches to the most baldly simple lines, and could not abide sacred painting or sculpture. Were they right?

John Addington Symonds, the historian of *The Renaissance in Italy,* will certainly not be discounted as one who lacked artistic appreciation; but in his volume on *The Fine Arts,* he ranges himself entirely on the side of the

Iconoclasts. "The spirit of Christianity and the spirit of figurative art are opposed, not because such art is immoral, but because it cannot free itself from sensuous associations. When the worshipper would fain ascend on wings of ecstasy to God, the infinite, ineffable, unrealised, how can he endure the contact of these splendid forms, in which the lust of the eye and the pride of life, professing to subserve devotion, remind him rudely of sensuous existence? Religion has its proper end in contemplation and in conduct. Art aims at presenting sensuous embodiment of thoughts and feelings with a view to intellectual enjoyment. There are many feelings which cannot properly assume a sensuous form; and these are precisely religious feelings, in which the soul abandons sense, and leaves the actual world behind, to seek her freedom in a spiritual region. As meteors become luminous by traversing the grosser element of our terrestrial atmosphere, so the thoughts that art employs must immerse themselves in sensuousness. Our deepest thoughts about the world and God are incapable of personification by any æsthetic process."

Admitting that art may, and often has, degraded religion by attempting to set forth in form and colour that which cannot be so described, is it not true that art has many times proved itself a valuable assistant to worship? Dion Chrysostom, speaking of the colossal figure of Zeus, carved by Phidias in the temple at Olympia, says, "Whosoever among mortal men is most utterly toil-worn in spirit, having drunk the cup of many sorrows and calamities, when he stands before this image, methinks, must utterly forget all the terrors and woes of this mortal life." And in Christian circles there are paintings of the Face of Christ or figures of Him (Thorwaldsen's, to name but one), which have gained a fixed place in the affection of devout hearts. Many of our Roman Catholic brethren, and possibly some Protestants, find the Crucifix an aid to devotion. Are we to condemn with the severity of this Commandment the making of any representation whatsoever of the Divine?

Most of us will answer, No. Such painted or carved images, if properly used, cannot be considered evil; they may be, as their users assert, helps to devotion. But it is surely not

without significance that no authentic memory whatever remains in the earth of the personal appearance of Jesus of Nazareth. Many of His sayings have been carefully preserved in the very words He used; occasionally a gesture or look is mentioned in the narrative of a memorable act; we possess unforgetable word-pictures of what He did and suffered, but not a syllable to recall what He was to men's eyes. We do not know whether He was tall or short, stout or slight, dark or fair. Not a hint is given us of the shape of a single feature of His face nor of the colour of His eyes. How accurate and full is the portrait of His spirit, His mind and heart! How completely lost in oblivion is His outward form! A careful Providence has done His best to teach us that the religious meanings of all things, of the Word made flesh Himself, lie not on their surface, where the eye can see them, but hidden, where they can be reached only by the eyes of the heart. An image, a painting, runs the risk of giving us superficial impressions, and concealing the message to the heart and the conscience. We seem to be so constituted that when we dwell with satisfaction on that which

pleases our sight, we dull our inward vision. Those who rejoice most heartily in pictured symbols of the Divine, are seldom those whose consciences grave Him in righteousness in their own or their world's life.

This ancient decree points out a genuine peril; and the history of religion enforces its lesson. It is they who endure as seeing Him who is invisible, without insisting on seeing some representation of Him with their eyes, who succeed in making His character most manifest in what they themselves are, and in what they make their homes, their work, their country, to be. We do not go for our stimuli to righteousness, nor for our highest thought of God, to the Greeks of the Golden Age of Pericles or to the Italians of the Renaissance, but to image-forbidden Hebrews and to image-destroying Reformers, Protestants and Puritans.

But very unfortunately Protestants and Puritans have not as yet satisfactorily evolved an art of their own that harmonises with their religion; and the artistic impulse, which cannot be neglected, constantly revives forms not in keeping with the faith of freed spirits. Ben-

jamin Jowett, the celebrated master of Balliol College, Oxford, after a tour through some of the cathedrals of England, observed: "It is the great misfortune of Protestantism never to have had an art or architecture. Hence it is always being dragged back through the medium of art into Romanism. The finest pictures and the noblest churches are Roman, and Roman is Pagan, and Romanism is dragged through the medium of art into Paganism, and into a bastard form of Paganism." One can think of many a church erected for Protestant worship, which is not fitted for preaching—an invariable and most important part of our conception of fellowship with God —and which transforms the simple friendly meal of the Lord's Supper, where Christ's disciples gather as one family about His table, into a ceremony much more in keeping with the partially non-Christian ideas which underlie the Roman Mass. We must not follow the letter of this commandment in scorning the figurative arts; they will take their own revenge upon us, for man is as normally artistic as he is religious; but we must set ourselves as a community to developing an art and an archi-

tecture that are the natural servants of the spiritual religion of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Nor is it so easy, as many think, to draw a sharp distinction between a graven image of stone that the eye can see and a graven image of thought which exists only in the mind, and be perfectly safe with this latter representation of God. The real difficulty with a graven image is its rigidity; it is a fixed, and therefore a limited and confining representation of Him who is limitless. A growing soul demands a growing thought of God; and mental images can be as stationary as marble or bronze. How perilous it is to carry in one's mind at twenty the same image of God that stood there at ten! How pathetic to see a man of forty looking with the eyes of his heart at a Divine Face that has no more in it for him than he saw there when he was one and twenty! Life's experiences to a believing spirit are so many disclosures of a great Companion; and each experience ought to put something more into the Face of that Companion which presents itself to the mind's eye. Thought-images of God are constructed

by every generation; they represent in some creed or confession of faith all that they and their predecessors have discovered of His character, expressed in the ideas and language of their age. And these are living things, a living Image, to contemporaries, or at all events to those who frame them; but when passed on to the next generation, they are often as lifeless as a carved statue. We worship the God of our fathers; but we dare not worship our fathers' image of God; that is idolatry. A living God will not allow Himself to be confined within the rigid forms of the thought of any particular age, and passed on in those forms to its successor. A living God demands ever fresh attempts by living minds to think Him out. They must carefully conserve all the spiritual discoveries of their predecessors; they must take into account all the spiritual discoveries of their own day; they must use all the intellectual tools their age affords them in graving the worthiest thought of Him to whom they give all their heart, soul, mind and strength. Not all idols are made of wood and stone; there are idols of the mind—dead thoughts of God which are not the products

of a living experience of Him. To harbour such is to go directly counter to the spirit of this ancient commandment.

But, above all, this commandment is a protest against man-made gods; our thought of God must be God-given. Religion is not man's search into the invisible, constructing image after image, and testing which of them corresponds with the Fact he discovers. Religion is God's search for man, disclosing Himself to us by everything He does for us and in us—by the world He made, by the natures He gave us in His own likeness, by all His acts in history, and by all His personal dealings with ourselves. Our part is not to search for Him, but to respond to His search for us; not to fancy some imaginary Divine Being we would like to worship, but to picture to our minds Him whom we have found in our experiences constraining us to adore Him by all the unveilings of His goodness He has made to us or to any man. Hence our image of God will not be our fancy of the best we can dream of, but the God-stamped impression on our minds of the Best we have ever known. It will not be our own painting of imaginary

perfection, but some disclosure to us of a perfection we cannot help adoring as Divine.

Here it is that Jesus Christ fills the place of the image of God in Christian minds. In this Man who actually lived in our earth, and whose memory has come down to us across the centuries, we find "the fluent Image of the unstable Best." His image has been before twenty centuries, and each century has seen more in Him than its predecessors; but each bows with utmost reverence and declares it can conceive of none loftier than He. When we wish to place before our minds the most adorable Face to which to direct our worship, we set in our mind's eye the Face of Jesus Christ. When we find our consciences compelled to obey their highest Ideal, we recognise that this ideal is none other than the Spirit of Jesus. And Jesus is not to us a man-made image of God. No doubt Jesus Himself had to co-operate with His Father in attaining His perfection; but He merely answered the promptings of that Father Himself within Him. His will was His Father's will; His works were His Father's business; His love was something He received from a

Heart above Him—"As the Father hath loved Me, I also have loved you." Jesus is for us God's Self-expression in a human life, God's image of Himself in a Man. Aught that does not correspond with that image, whether it be told us by a Bible writer or by the voice of many Christian centuries, is not for us a true likeness of God. We

> "Correct the portrait by the living Face,
> Man's God by God's God in the mind of man."

And while we find God imaged in Jesus, Jesus takes care that even this God-made image shall not bound and limit our thought of God. In the same breath in which He tells Philip, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father," He continues, "The Father is greater than I." We have Jesus' own warrant for placing ever more in our thought of God, more even than we find in Jesus. The "more" will not be different from that which was in Him, or it would not be truly divine, truly like God; but every glimpse of beauty, every disclosure of truth, every ideal of righteousness, that comes to us from any quarter and is akin to the beauty, truth, righteousness of

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Jesus, is for us God—God revealing Himself to-day to us, God making a larger, truer, more adorable and lovable image of Himself in our minds, that we may answer Him with a fuller trust, a warmer love, a completer obedience, and manifest Him to the world in a diviner life.

# THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

## THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

Exodus xx:7: *"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain."*

This commandment was primarily a safeguard for the sanctity of oaths. On solemn occasions we hear Israelites calling God to witness that they speak the truth and will surely perform their promise. We are familiar with such phrases as: "The Lord do so to me and more also, if—," "As the Lord liveth," "Saul sware by the Lord to the witch at Endor." And they were warned that "the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain."

Human society—the relations of man to man in government, trade, friendship, the home—rests upon mutual confidence; and there cannot be trust where there is not truthfulness. Religion is the foundation of society in the sense that men's connection with God binds them to each other; their fear to lie to Him prevents them from lying to their neighbours,

at least in those instances where they deliberately invoke His name. And in a world of lies it is of incalculable value that there should be some circumstances under which one can be certain that men are speaking verity. In the light of the present awful conflict in Europe, of what worth would it have been to have had the name of a God, men genuinely feared, taken to guarantee treaties solemnly sworn! We cannot but share Wordsworth's feeling:

> "Earth is sick
> And Heaven is weary of the hollow words
> Which states and kingdoms utter when they talk
> Of truth and justice."

We in this country, who are sincerely anxious to be fair, as we read the conflicting statements of partisans, are tempted to conclude that all national representatives are liars; and we long to get the responsible leaders together, put them under oath to some Deity they revere (if there be any such), warn them "thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain," and then try to elicit the truth.

The social value of this ancient commandment is entirely apparent; and we still admin-

ister oaths to witnesses in court, to officials entering upon public office, and to citizens taking up their responsibilities as sovereigns of this people-ruled country. But Jesus criticised this commandment harshly: "Swear not at all; but let your speech be Yea, yea; Nay, nay; and whatsoever is more than these is of evil." If we take oaths upon some occasions, we imply that on other occasions we may not be speaking the truth. No one ought to need to say of a Christian: "I would believe him under oath." It is better, to be sure, that we should be able to believe a man under oath, than not to be able to believe him under any circumstances; but a Christian ought to be invariably trustworthy. His bare word should be entirely sufficient; his Yes is yes, his No, no. Whatsoever is more, although it may not be of itself sinful, must be recognised as coming of evil, coming of the current untruthfulness which makes an oath advisable.

And how widespread the evil is! Much of the general falsehood is not intentional. People are slipshod in their use of language, pass on unverified rumours, say things because they sound interesting regardless of their veracity.

"Speaking truth," says Ruskin, "is like writing fair, and comes only by practice; it is less a matter of will than of habit." We get in the way of colouring narratives, spicing conversation, embroidering the plain vesture of fact; and our taste for simple truth is ruined. A large amount of inaccuracy has become a social convention. A scrupulous regard for fact is a serious drawback to entertaining conversation. One feels that it would be most wholesome if, into the midst of a group of persons chatting in the exaggerated and largely imaginative way that prevails in many social gatherings, some rough-spoken man, like Dr. Samuel Johnson, should break with his blunt demand for fact. In Boswell's *Life* is this entry: "When he and I were one day endeavouring to ascertain, article by article, how one of our friends could possibly spend as much money in his family as he told us he did, Mrs. Thrale interrupted us by a lively extravagant sally on the expense of clothing his children, describing it in a very ludicrous and fanciful manner, Johnson looked a little angry and said: 'Nay, madam, when you are declaiming, declaim, and when you are calculating, calculate.'"

And even when we take pains to state fact and nothing but fact, it is a difficult matter to be utterly truthful. Jowett of Balliol was fond of recalling an ancient philosopher who was afraid of telling lies and used to wag with his finger instead of speaking. "Afterwards he gave this up as partaking more or less of the nature of untruth." It requires no small effort to fulfil our Lord's commandment to make our Yea exactly yea, and our Nay precisely nay.

And in the attempt we discover that truthfulness goes back of the tongue and its speech. It is a quality of a man's spirit. If there is straightness of nature, the tongue will not lie; if there is crookedness within, no matter how good our intentions, we shall not speak the truth. Emerson once wrote very searchingly: "Use what language you will, you can never say anything but what you are. What I am and what I think is conveyed to you, in spite of my efforts to hold it back. What I am has been secretly conveyed from me to another, whilst I was vainly making up my mind to tell him it. He has heard from me what I never spoke." A Christian's entire life

is named with the name of his Lord, the Lord of truth; and a deceitful thought, the refusal to look at distasteful facts, the indulgence of what is recognised as prejudice, is to take the name of the Lord, our God, in vain. "Thou desirest truth in the inward parts" is a psalmist's much more Christianlike application of this ancient precept. In the House of Commons Disraeli once said to John Bright: "Bright, I would give all that I ever had to have made that speech you made just now." "And I just said to him," Bright reports, "Well, you might have made it, if you had been honest." Where all life is inspired with true motives, oaths will be needless. All men's ordinary speech will be wholly trustworthy, every Yea, yea, and Nay, nay.

This commandment is often quoted in connection with another kind of swearing—profanity. Happily this is now out of fashion, and is considered, among all but a few very young persons, to be a mark of ill-breeding. If one compares the conversation placed upon the lips of well-brought-up and educated men in the novels of a generation or more ago, when every gentleman was sup-

posed to pepper and salt his speech profusely with curses, we can note a decided advance. Profanity is a sign of an impoverished vocabulary; its users have no command of expressions for their strong feelings. Bunyan confesses: "I knew not how to speak unless I put an oath before, and another behind, to make my words have authority." A larger acquaintance with our wealthy English tongue and a truer sense of the weight of words, as well as his new Christian conscience, made him realise that he weakened rather than strengthened his speech by his invariable curses. Carlyle wrote of his old Scotch father: "In anger he had no need of oaths; his words were like sharp arrows that smote into the very heart." And he transmitted to his distinguished son that vivid, forceful, adequate command of language.

Or profanity is a sign of impoverished thought. Lord Byron remarked of an acquaintance: "He knew not what to say, and so he swore." We are told of Laurence Oliphant's father that he "got into the way of using bad words for want of something to say." Our Lord supplemented this com-

mandment most helpfully along these lines when He said solemnly: "I say unto you that every *idle* word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." When we have nothing to say, we must learn not to try to say it. The babble of words we do not mean is not so harmless as we sometimes think. We acquire the habit of insincerity; we divide ourselves up into two men, one a fairly substantial and thoughtful person, unknown to most of those who meet us, who on rare occasions comes forward and speaks; and the other a lightweight, very much to the fore in all encounters, who talks incessantly and is usually considered by most of our acquaintances to be our entire self. The effect of such division is not only to make us hypocrites, acting a sorry rôle in the world with this impostor who in no sense represents our genuine thoughts and feelings, but to diminish the size and influence of the real man within. None of us has more in him than is required to fill the part in life assigned him; we cannot afford idle words or idle deeds. Futilities of speech and conduct are costly luxuries. What we say must be

what we mean, or we blaspheme the Name we bear as truly as if we interjected curses when we had nothing else to say. "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

This commandment occurs to us in still another connection. One of the most shocking facts to Christian consciences at the time of the outbreak of this present war was the constant appeal to God on the part of the leaders of some of the warring nations, and the ascription of their successes to His favour. We must make due allowance for wrought-up emotions, and for the sense of the justice of their cause, in those who employed these expressions. Whether they were right or not, we need not question their sincerity. But to invoke the name of God, of the Christian God, in the work of slaughter and destruction, to claim Him as sanctioning national self-aggrandisement and the use of force for its accomplishment, is a sad indication of the widespread ignorance of what the name of the Christian God really signifies. It is a pity that Christians in speaking of their God have got out of the way of connecting Him definitely with the faith of Jesus

Himself. When Paul wished to name Him, he said most often, "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." If men said "Christ's God," would it be as easy for them to claim that He is with them, blessing their weapons of bloody butchery, as they sally forth to make corpses of their brethren for whose sake Christ died? It is horrible to think what Mohammedans, Jews, Buddhists and heathen of various faiths and no faiths, must conclude regarding the character of the God adored by followers of Christ from the expressions used concerning Him in this unspeakable business now on in Christian Europe. "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles." Would that some pagan could catch the ear of the warring nations, and, when they are thanking their God for help in their work of devastation, speak up boldly: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain."

Who is our God? Is He force or is He love? Can we bid a departing company of armed troops farewell with the words: "The God of love be with you and bless you"? There are

circumstances when Christian men feel summoned to fight and, if need be, to die in love's name for the protection of the oppressed and the unjustly dealt with; but surely no one who really knows the name of God in Jesus can lift a rifle or point a cannon or discharge a torpedo without feeling that the act is in itself inherently unchristian. We live in a world where we cannot be saved by ourselves; so long as there are nations that appeal to brute might and use it, it is hard to see how Christians, much as they condemn themselves, can do anything else but resist for the defence of their land and of others weaker than they; but while they commend themselves and their cause to God's justice, they must beware of invoking His name as blessing their work of slaughter. It sounds perilously like blasphemy to assert that He, the God of Jesus, the God of Calvary, is with a band of man-slayers on land and sea.

But were this commandment to be phrased to-day might it not more likely read: "Thou shalt take the name of the Lord, thy God"? If ancient Hebrews were apt to speak of God too frequently, is not the modern temptation to mention Him too seldom? Ours is a singularly

tongue-tied faith. There must always be a reserve in talking of that which means most to us; we do not air our affection for wife or husband in promiscuous company, nor dwell upon our loyalty to some dear friend in casual conversation. A faith that did not surround itself with proper reticence would be shallow and cheap. But love and friendship both crave expression. However undemonstrative a person's nature, if his affection has no way of showing itself, it cannot live. An unuttered faith stands in similar danger of suffocation.

Among ourselves thousands of Protestant Christians will have little or nothing to do with causes that are distinctly labelled with the Christian name. They are interested in social settlements or philanthropic societies, from which for obvious and sufficient reasons explicit religious teaching is barred; but they take no part in the work of the Christian Church. They can be enlisted for a sewing class or a fresh air outing; but they have no zest for work that involves direct speech on religious subjects. There is a widespread passion for anonymous Christianity. But an un-

named God becomes a forgotten God. Work undertaken originally from religious motives loses its power when one ceases to connect it openly with God. The spiritual tone and force gradually evaporate from those who do not take pains to insure that somewhere their spirituality shall find full expression. An apologetic faith that hides its head soon ceases to possess a believing head worth hiding.

There are time-honoured, and therefore not indelicate, ways of taking the name of God. There is the custom of meeting publicly with other believers once a week and acknowledging ourselves God's children, grateful for His care, penitent for our unworthiness, dependent on His love and ready to receive His message. Men may say what they will about the relative unimportance of regular church-going, they may speak (and it is unfortunate that they have so much reason to speak) of the unprofitableness of many church services; the fact remains that one rarely finds a vigorous, thoughtful, earnest and devoted follower of Jesus who has abandoned this practice. Christian faith is essentially social, and it does not

attain normal health unless it finds systematic social expression. We should not have thought much of the Christianity of the Dutch settlers of Manhattan three centuries ago * had they not built and attended a church. Why should we expect less of ourselves to-day?

There is the custom commended by many generations of believers of daily family worship—surely not an immodest way of parading our piety to the world. The Christian religion is so largely a family matter;—its chief words are family words—Father, son, love, home; its principal method of self-perpetuation is by inheritance from parents to children; its first obligations are within the home circle—"specially they of his own household"; its most typical rite is a family meal—the Lord's Supper; that it craves an utterance in every home. If we are agreed that a world at war, a world in almost as terrible a conflict in its industrial relations, a world oppressing us with a burdening feeling of its wrongness,—if we are agreed that our world to-day needs more genuine

* This sermon was preached on the 300th anniversary of the settlement of New Amsterdam—the founding of New York City.

religion, where shall we begin to inject it, if not in our own household?

There is, again, the long established usage of naming God in thankfulness each time we sit down at table—another by no means ostentatious manner of expressing faith, but a custom omitted in many homes through diffidence, or even because it is not considered "smart." To be sure there is no more reason why one should thank God before eating than before walking or bathing or dressing; but it is a recognised way of taking His name, a form commended by the personal example of Jesus Himself and of centuries of His faithful followers. Never to allude to God is to banish Him from thought and heart, and to render life godless.

But, above all, this sobering time calls for an end of our hampering shyness in taking God's name and advancing intelligent faith. When one thinks of the state of the world, and of the so-called Christian world, one is reminded of Hosea's solemn utterance: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." We must face the fact of abysmal ignorance of the Christian God throughout the earth. Much

nominal Christianity has only the faintest connection with the religion of the New Testament. There is crass superstition; there is a superficial veneer of Christian words over pagan ideals and pagan principles; there is a cynical unbelief among many of ourselves that the kind of Deity we read of in the Gospels and talk of in church is the actual God who is Lord of heaven and earth. There is an urgent summons for us to name the Invisible to ourselves; shall we call the Deity on whom we rely the Father of Jesus Christ? There is an urgent summons for believers in that Name, to teach it constantly to the ignorant millions in our own and other lands. What possible assurance have we that our American people would not act as ungodly as any of their kinsmen across the seas? Are we Protestant Christians willing to pay the cost in personal service, in sacrificial giving, in thoughtful and toilsome readaptation of our churches to meet present conditions, that our vast population shall really understand and trust in the name of God? Or shall we wait and be forced to pay the cost a thousandfold in some pagan catastrophe like that now turning Europe into

a shambles? Are we prepared to make sacrifices as great as those of war-cursed nations in order to maintain and push forward the Christian missionary enterprise at home and throughout the world, convinced that only the name of the God and Father of Jesus Christ, known, trusted, obeyed, will lift our world out of its savagery into the divine-human life of Him, who has borne God's name as His Son?

To thyself, to thy household, to thy mighty metropolitan city, to thy beloved country, to the world for which Christ died, thou shalt take the name of the Lord, thy God.

# THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

## THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

Exodus xx:8: *"Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy."*

In order to make the whole of life God's possession the Hebrews systematically "set apart" certain sections of it. One nation—Israel—was holy; one tribe—Levi—was made the priestly caste; one building—the temple at Jerusalem—was held sacred as God's dwelling-place; one part of the harvest—the first fruits—was dedicated; one day in every seven was kept free from labour as a religious festival. A consecrated people, a consecrated place, a consecrated product, a consecrated time—these and other similarly sanctified fragments of life were to them reminders of God's claims upon the world that He had made. "Verily ye shall keep My sabbaths," ran one of their oldest codes of law, "for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am Jehovah who sanctifieth you."

Were we to attempt to devise to-day some scheme for idealising life, for lifting and linking it to God, could we hit upon a more effective method? Suppose there had been no sabbath, would we not be inventing it? Does it not seem to fit in with the structure of our human natures? Husbands and wives like to recall their wedding anniversary. It is not that they do not love each other as truly on the other three hundred and sixty-four days in the year, nor expect as constantly and carefully to fulfil their mutual obligations. But their sentiment naturally marks this day from other days as commemorating their wedded happiness. The specially remembered day has something to do with their loving fidelity to each other on all other days. A sabbath, a day set apart to call to mind the union of man's life with God, seems as inevitable and as natural a mode of expressing our religious sentiment. When the Hebrews spoke of the sabbath as part of the original creation, made in the same week with sky and earth and sea, and pictured God Himself as resting on the seventh day, they were expressing in their way what we feel when we say that

a specially hallowed day is congruous with the very fabric of our beings. It is "tangled with all things, twin-made with all."

Scholars tell us that the Hebrews took over the habit of dividing time up into weeks of seven days from their Semitic ancestors in Babylonia, from whom also came the idea of holding one of these days as sacred to the gods, a day of ill-omen on which to work or journey. But Israel's faith transmuted everything it received in its heritage; and what it made out of this day, its ancestors considered unlucky for work, discloses the kind of God Israel worshipped, the sort of festival they thought would please Him. Its sabbath was primarily a humane day: "Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest; that thine ox and thine ass may have rest, and the son of thy handmaid and the sojourner may be refreshed." "In it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. And

thou shalt remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt." Our Lord gave the true interpretation of the meaning of the day, as it was understood by Israel's spiritual leaders who had planted it in the consciences of their people, when He said: "The sabbath was made for man." Israel's God differed from the deities of Babylon in His humaneness; He cared for the slave, the stranger and the dumb cattle. A day set apart to Him must be a humane day; and the sabbath was an early step in leading Israel up to the conviction that God is love.

This accounts for the popularity of the sabbath in Israel. The great mass of the people instinctively recognised it as a safeguard against their exploitation, as a *magna charta* guaranteeing them rest. The only persons who are recorded as disliking it are grasping traders—"ye that would swallow up the needy, saying when will the sabbath be gone that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small and the shekel great"—and devotees of amusements, who without a sense of social responsibility found the rest day no delight. The nation as a whole clung to it more tenaciously

than to any other religious practice. Despite the many restrictions with which the later rabbis surrounded it, it does not seem to have been a day of burden and gloom to those who lived under it. A prominent Jewish scholar wrote a few years ago: "The sabbath is celebrated by the very people who did observe it, in hundreds of hymns, which would fill volumes, as a day of rest and joy, of pleasure and delight, a day in which a man enjoys some presentiment of the pure bliss and happiness which are stored up for the righteous in the world to come." To it such tender names were applied as the "Queen Sabbath," and "the holy, dear, beloved Sabbath."

But what meaning has the Hebrew sabbath for us Christians? Technically none whatsoever. We are not living under law with prescribed observances, but in the Spirit of Jesus Christ. The attempt to make out that in the New Testament the sabbath is re-established, and shifted from the seventh to the first day of the week, is merely to read into the New Testament what is not there; and the effort to find some basis for keeping Sunday as the sabbath by saying that privately

our Lord, or at least His apostles, gave directions to this effect, although they are not recorded, is equally fanciful. Listen to St. Paul: "Let no man judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of a feast day, or a new moon, or a sabbath day; which are a shadow of the things to come, but the body is Christ's." The law of the sabbath was for him on the same level with the laws as to meats and drinks and various festivals, a law that had its value as a tutor to lead to Christ, but is now no longer needed. Again he writes: "One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let each man be fully assured in his own mind." "The Lord's day" had its origin entirely apart from the sabbath. It was not commanded by Jesus, nor by any of His immediate followers. It was simply kept for sentimental reasons by Christians as an appropriate day on which to come together for worship, because on it Jesus had risen from the grave, and on it at Pentecost the disciples had received the Spirit. It was not a day of rest; it could not be when the Christians were a small minority in the population and possessed no political power; it was

a day of work, but after or before working-hours the Christians met together to revive in one another the spirit of their living Lord. Paul was not concerned with giving advice to churches that could influence the state to enact a legal holiday; he was thinking of little communities made up of slaves and artisans, who must live their lives under an altogether indifferent imperial government.

But as soon as Christianity became the dominant religious force under Constantine, it obtained legislation making Sunday a day free from labour. Its motives were in part the identical motives that set apart the Jewish sabbath—the desire to obtain humane relief for the labouring classes; in part it wished to secure sufficient leisure for its religious services. The civilised world to-day owes this work-free day to the efforts of the Christian Church. Whatever men do with it, they ought to recognise to whom they are indebted for it.

Under the circumstances in which we find ourselves at present the individual Christian faces two problems: how to safeguard the holiday and how to turn the holiday into a holy day.

When we insist on the holiday we remember that Jesus came not to destroy but to fulfil. The sabbath as a humane institution, protecting labourers from being overworked, was something He prized. Whether this sabbath should be kept on the seventh or first day of each week we feel would be a matter of indifference to Him. If New York should become an even greater Jewish community than it now is, we might well discuss the question whether Saturday, and not Sunday, should be the weekly religious festival. As it is, there is more likelihood of the world's agreeing on the first than on the seventh day, and many of our Jewish fellow-citizens are holding Sunday services. Which day is of small matter; but the weekly holiday is a necessary provision in the interest of humanity. Christians and Jews and all lovers of their fellow-men can combine in insisting that the community shall provide that on one day in every seven no man or woman need work; it may go farther and say that if special inducements are offered to him to labour as on the other six days, it will step in and forbid his working, exactly as it forbids his doing other unhealthy things.

And while we are speaking of what we in a democracy can induce the legislature to enact, it ought to go without saying that Christian employers will assure their employees the weekly rest-day. Unfortunately there are among ourselves the same two classes, against whom Israel's prophets had to speak as hostile to this human holiday: pushing business-men who keep their factories or their office-forces on duty for at least a part of Sunday in the greedy effort for gain, or insist that labourers shall toil on buildings or excavations or machines to fulfil the time-clause in a contract or carry out rush-orders; and devotees of pleasure, who are regardless of the needs and desires of others, and give social entertainments, or indulge in certain kinds of sport, which necessitate work on the part of employees. "The sabbath was made for man," and especially for the man who is not in control of his own time, and who needs to be protected from the greed or thoughtlessness of those who would rob him of his day of rest.

In a complex modern city it is by no means so easy as in agricultural Israel to select a single day out of the seven and have every

one rest together on it. It is certainly desirable that as many persons as possible shall keep the same day; only so can its social value, as a day for families to be together, for friends to see each other, for fellow-believers to worship in common, be maintained. More social conscience, more of the humanity that prompted Israel's sabbath, could reduce, and profitably reduce, a vast amount of the Sunday work that is now required. There could easily be more hours out of the twenty-four when the community could agree to be quiet, and so lessen the necessity for transit facilities, for the opening of shops of various sorts, and for the employment of many men and women in a host of positions. And this diminution of the quantity and decrease of the hours of Sunday work ought to be pushed, not primarily for religious reasons, but for (what are really just as religious motives) humanitarian reasons. Small shop-keepers do not want to keep their business open all day, but they are afraid to lose customers, if they close while their rivals are open. Railroad companies keep trains moving so long as there is any profit in the traffic, and at times when there is no profit

to accommodate a small part of the public. We ought to aid labour-unions, and socially-minded organisations of all sorts, in safeguarding the weekly holiday by legislation, and especially by the creation of public sentiment which lies behind every enforceable law.

And if we insist on the holiday in the interests of humanity, we cannot content ourselves with a merely negative position, saying "You shall not labour," and give ourselves no concern with the positive uses to which the compulsory holiday shall be put. We have a right to protect men against themselves and forbid their overworking, particularly as their overwork probably will force a similar strain on others; we have no right to compel them to worship. We would be glad, of course, to have every one wish to spend the holiday as a holyday, and we can remind them that when the holyday vanishes the holiday is likely to disappear, but so long as some will not keep it as a holyday, we must agree as a community to a compromise. The religious element have a right to demand that they be guaranteed a reasonable degree of quiet for the fulfilment of their worship; the less religious or non-religious

elements have a right to be allowed the fullest indulgence in recreation, provided on the one hand it does not disturb worship, and on the other that it does not entail too hard labour, for that defeats the social purpose of the holiday.

For those whose callings make it impossible that they shall be given a day free from labour on the weekly sabbath, the community ought to insist that some equivalent amount of rest be assured them at other times. And the Church must see to it that, if possible, opportunity for religious inspiration is accorded them at the time when they are free. This requires more meetings or services on the part of our churches, and more workers to conduct them; and it is a duty, to which in every great city the Church must address itself.

As worshippers of a God whom we know to be love, we have even more reason than the Hebrews for insisting on the holiday as a divine interest. Indeed, when so many of our people work in factories, offices, furnaces, mines and similar shut-in employments, there is far more necessity for securing free hours that can be spent in the open, than in agricul-

tural Israel. The Saturday or midweek half-holiday seems as religious a cause for us to champion as the ancient sabbath-rest. If we can secure regularly a half-holiday for pleasure, we shall have more reason to claim the Sunday for religion.

And this brings us to our Christian task of transforming the holiday into a holyday. Let us take our stand with St. Paul and remind ourselves that as followers of Jesus our whole life is to be devoted to Him. One day cannot be more sacred than another, for all are to be given exclusively to God's will. We cannot speak, therefore, of something as being wrong for us on Sunday, but right on Monday. We must make the best use of each day, and anything less than the best is wrong, whether it be week-day or Sunday; and the best, as we see it under Christ's guidance, is right on all days. It is lawful sabbath-day or any other day to do good.

But here is a day that has been won as a holiday by the Christians of the past, and that is hallowed by the remembrance of Jesus's victory and called "The Lord's Day." There is no divine law telling us how to spend it, for

we are not servants but friends. We have to ask ourselves as intelligent and thoughtful sons of God how we can most appropriately use the day. Instead of discussing what is right or wrong on Sunday, let us think of what is appropriate or inappropriate.

The God to whom we keep the day holy is called "Father." His festival day seems fittingly to be a family day. There are few enough contacts between parents and children, between the members of the household. What more suitable to the day than some simple family gathering for worship—Bible reading, prayer, perhaps hymn-singing? Where there are young children, this is surely the day when father and mother should try to pass on to them their inheritance of Christian faith. No Church and Sunday School training can take the place of home lessons in religion. The most delightful books, the best-loved stories, the most-prized walks with a usually busy father, ought to be kept to mark this as the best day in the week.

Again, this God to whom we hallow the holiday has brought us into a larger family —"the household of faith." That family

gathers in the house of God and enters collectively into the Father's larger life. Religion will not long remain vital in the life that loses touch with fellow believers. It is all very well to say that we are as near to God under the blue sky as in a Church building, that we can worship just as well by doing some quiet thinking as by singing hymns and listening to prayers and sermons, but the fact remains that the thought of God fades out of the heart that is not restamped with it by the weekly reminder of Him in the house set apart for His worship. A special day is observed by something appropriate to its meaning. The Fourth of July demands a patriotic observance as the nation's birthday. Sunday requires a Church service as the Church's birthday, the anniversary of its awakening to the joyous faith in love's victory in Christ and to the sense of its spiritual power through sharing His Spirit of love to set up His Kingdom in the whole world's life.

Above all, if we make the day holy to the Father of Jesus Christ, His special interest is in His most needy children. His chief

delight is not in the ninety and nine just persons who are already conscientious, but in the sinner who is led to repentance, in the child who is brought to dedicate his life to righteousness. Unless we provide to the extent of our abilities for some work on Sunday for the benefit of others who need our sympathy, our knowledge, our faith, we do not spend it suitably as the day of the Lord Jesus, the day we hallow to His God and Father.

Because we are under no Sabbath law each of us must settle for himself, as an independent and responsible child of God, how he shall keep the day holy. John was "in the Spirit on the Lord's day" and had certain great experiences; but had James or Peter or Paul been in the Spirit on the Lord's day on Patmos their ways of receiving and showing that same Spirit would have been certainly different. Not by following prescribed rules, but by surrendering ourselves thoughtfully and conscientiously to the control of the Spirit of Christ, shall we discover how to make our Sundays most godlike, labour-free days. We shall differ widely; there will be the unity of the Spirit.

And the uses to which we put our Sundays are searching tests of what we are. Those who devote them largely to physical exercise, disclose themselves as seeking primarily to be healthy animals. Those who set them apart for a good time, write themselves down as caring most for pleasure. Those who use them for friendly visits, announce themselves as sociably minded men and women of this world, whose horizons are bounded and whose hearts are satisfied with the associations of earth. Those who deliberately devote the day to the Father in heaven, to binding their homes to Him, to contributing their presence to the worshipping company of His children, to accomplishing some part of His purpose for brethren who need what they can supply, judge themselves children of God, unsatisfied without a glimpse of the King in His beauty and of the land of far distances. The judgment is all the more significant in an age like ours when there is no strong social pressure on us to hallow the day, but rather the reverse; and when we frankly recognise that we are under no divine commandment, but acting freely as trusted friends of Jesus. The holiday comes

to us as a bequest from the believers of the past who won it for humanity's sake, and who hallowed it as the Lord's day for Christ's sake; and the use to which we put it makes it a judgment day, our judgment of what we [illegible] and seek.

# THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT

## THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT

Exodus xx: 12: *"Honour thy father and thy mother."*

No one chooses his parents; and in a democratic age, when the freedom of the individual to select his own rulers and determine for himself those to whom he will give his loyalty and obedience is a fundamental principle, there is a very different attitude towards hereditary obligations than under a monarchy. Parents are frequently regarded as an accident of birth. Some people are quite certain that, had they picked their own father and mother, they would have made other selections. They find themselves heirs of an undesirable inheritance. They trace the pedigree of their most hampering characteristics, their least likable faults, their unloveliest weaknesses, directly to their ancestors. William Dean Howells has written:

"That swollen paunch you are doomed to bear
Your gluttonous grandsire used to wear;

That tongue at once so light and dull,
Wagged in your grandma's empty skull;
That leering of the sensual eye,
Your father, when he came to die,
Left you alone; and that cheap flirt,
Your mother, gave you from the dirt
The simper which she used upon
So many men ere he was won."

And even where the gifts of heredity are prized, there is often a maladjustment of temperaments to each other that assures almost constant friction between parents and children. Sometimes it is due to the utter unlikeness of children to parents; with features and voice and walk that duplicate father's or mother's, the nature within appears to have been born of some other spirit altogether. Oftener it is their very likeness in disposition that produces disagreement. Father and son, mother and daughter, admirable in themselves, are too alike to get on well together. Two strong wills are nearly foredoomed to clash; two impulsive natures are well nigh certain to produce in each other an explosion of feeling and temper; two reserved people are all but predestined to mutual misunderstandings. George Eliot, that keen analyst of the effects

of characters upon each other, says in describing the resemblance and difference between Adam Bede and his mother: "Family likeness has often a deep sadness in it. Nature, that great tragic dramatist, knits us together by bone and muscle, and divides us by the subtler web of our brains; blends yearning and repulsion; and ties us by our heart-strings to the beings that jar us at every movement. We hear a voice with the very cadence of our own uttering the thoughts we despise; we see eyes—ah! so like our mother's—averted from us in cold alienation; and our last darling child startles us with the air and gestures of the sister we parted from in bitterness long years ago. The father to whom we owe our best heritage—the mechanical instinct, the keen sensibility to harmony, the unconscious skill of the modelling hand—galls us, and puts us to shame by his daily errors; the long-lost mother, whose face we begin to see in the glass as our wrinkles come, once fretted our young souls with her anxious humours and irrational persistence."

We provide for divorces between husbands and wives, who cannot endure living together;

is it reasonable that there should be no reputable way by which sons and daughters can free themselves from obligations to parents whom they discover to be intolerable?

The difficulties of maintaining the proper relations between children and parents are vastly increased among ourselves by two factors. One is the change in social status due to the acquisition of wealth or of education. Son or daughter find themselves living in a different world from that to which father and mother are accustomed, and in which they will continue to live so long as life lasts. It is a world of other ideas and other ideals; several centuries seem to lie between two immediately touching generations. A great gulf divides their feelings, their sympathies, their opinions, their convictions, even their consciences. Sometimes we should call the older generation better than the younger; as often, perhaps, the children are better than their parents. But no matter with which the advantage lies, the difficulty of preserving the right relations between the two becomes acute. We can all think of tragic situations where father and mother have toiled and saved, and given their

children advantages of culture and social position they never themselves possessed, only to have a chasm sunder son or daughter from them.

The other is the change in country that works such havoc with the family ties in hosts of our immigrant homes. Children, born here or brought here young, grow up in our atmosphere, are trained in our schools, imbibe our ideals and find themselves thousands of miles away in sentiment and thought and faith from their parents. Very often they know far more, have much keener intuitions and brighter minds, are actually earning more at eighteen than father and mother can earn, and instead of children looking up to and being led by parents, the relationship is reversed, and the children lead them into the unfamiliar ways of the new land of their adoption. It is not only that son and daughter speak naturally a different language and can hardly express themselves in the parental tongue, but that they are different in mind and heart, in the very structure and fibre of their beings. Home tragedies frequently result; and one scarcely knows which is the more to blame, or whether

either is really blameworthy when circumstances have so widely separated the two generations.

To what extent can we apply a commandment, devised for tribesmen among whom sons and daughters grew up to follow the callings and repeat almost exactly the careers of their ancestors, to conditions where the lives of children are so totally unlike those in which their parents were reared?

Has it not been a cardinal error of our individualism to think so often of our obligations as voluntary? Many men regard civic duties as purely optional; they *may* be interested in politics, they do not feel that they *must*. We *may* burden ourselves with the woes of our brethren in war-stricken Europe; but we are sensible of no irresistible moral compulsion. The more social conscience into which God is trying to educate us will certainly recognise obligations in many more relationships which we have had no choice whatsoever in forming. Responsibilities are almost never willingly and freely chosen; they are thrust upon us. And family ties, with whose formation we had nothing to do, are just those best

fitted to stretch our consciences and develop us into the larger, more brotherly-minded children of God it is our Father's main aim to produce.

Happily very few of us wish to exchange our parents for others. We may see faults in them; for love need not be blind; but we see infinitely more to love and revere. We cannot forget that in our helpless infancy it was their devotion that watched our every breath, kept us alive through numberless childish ills, soothed our small but very real sorrows, planned our happiness, bore in patience with our early but often precociously mature iniquities, thought us wonderful when to all other eyes we were very ordinary children, discovered music in our voices, wisdom in our sayings, beauty in our faces, saintliness in our actions and a charm in our companionship, when to everybody else we were shrill-toned, stupid or forward, plain, mischievous, troublesome specimens of young humanity. They may have spoiled us; they may have disciplined us unwisely; there may be a great many things we wish they had done or had left undone for us in our childhood;

but they *loved* us. There is probably not a life here behind which does not lie very genuine parental sacrifice; and behind many of us lies a sacrifice comparable only to that supreme Self-offering on Calvary. Father and mother scarcely had a thought in which we did not occur, made no plan that did not include our welfare or pleasure, forwent many an interesting amusement and denied themselves many much desired benefits that they might give us advantages, and day and night freely spent and were spent for our sakes. Not to treat them with the utmost deference, not to yield them heartiest and most considerate affection, is to show ourselves contemptible ingrates.

Many persons are puzzled by finding a special reward attached to this commandment. Paul calls it "the first commandment with promise." Why should honouring father and mother be recompensed more than fidelity to God or remembering the Sabbath? It seems less necessary to offer an inducement to keep this commandment because it is easier to many of us than some of the rest. And is it true that those who respect their parents live longer than those who do not? Rewards in the Bible

are always results. This is not a bribe to entice us to fulfil our filial duties; this is a statement by the law-giver of the experience of men, that children who defer to the maturer judgment of their elders avoid the life-shortening follies of youth. It is a common-sense statement which is borne out by the experience of the race in every generation.

It seems slightly unfair that the Decalogue should contain a commandment for children, but none for parents. Paul, when he writes "Children obey your parents in the Lord," at once adds, "And ye fathers provoke not your children to wrath, but nurture them in the chastening and admonition (the discipline and training) of the Lord." One would like to insert *Commandment No. 5 A*, "Fathers and mothers prove yourself honourable." Most parents receive all the respect they deserve; and there are some who make it exceedingly difficult for their children to reverence them. Not to speak of positive wickedness, there are so many whose smallness or flippancy or silliness or emptiness do not render them easily honoured. There is something, further, in the spirit of our age that has altered parents

as profoundly as in other ways it has altered children. It is a common remark that there are no more old people. One very rarely meets man or woman to whom one could apply the adjective "venerable," or who would themselves like to have such an adjective applied to them. Our grandmothers used to acquiesce in old age, often accept it as a proud distinction, and both dressed and acted the part. Their coevals to-day take the utmost pains not to seem elderly. Perhaps the advances of medical science, with its devices for counteracting some some of the crippling infirmities of age, may account in part for the change. Surely it is right that men and women should keep themselves limber and active and alive in interest that they may be useful as long as they possibly can. But is there anything more deadening to respect than the silly effort to appear more youthful than one really is? It is a fine thing for parents to make themselves companions and comrades of their children; but "chumminess" won at the cost of reverence is a questionable gain for both children and parents.

To be sure, parents do not want to be asking themselves, "How can I make my children

honour me?" When any of us begins to think about his dignity, he becomes inevitably less dignified. Honour comes without seeking to those whose purposes are sufficiently high, whose lives are devoted to aims men cannot help respecting, whose consciences and convictions lift them above things petty and contemptible. True comradeship of the closest sort need not in the least do away with unfailing respect, but rather enhances it when father and son, mother and daughter are companions in that which is in itself exalting. And the surest road to true honour lies in so living with the Most High, and so taking children into the life with Him, that their thoughts of God, their hallowed thoughts, will naturally include you. Thomas Carlyle exclaims with heartfelt devotion: "Oh, pious mother, kind, good, brave and truthful soul as I have ever found in this world, your poor Tom has fallen very lonely, very lame and broken in this pilgrimage of his; and you cannot help by a kind word any more. But from your grave in Ecclefechan Kirkyard yonder you bid him trust in God; and that also he will try to do, for the conquest of the world and of death and hell does verily lie in that."

Robert Louis Stevenson writes to his father: "I wish that I might become a man worth talking of, if it were only that you should not have thrown away your pains;" and Mrs. Napier says of the son: "In the Vailima prayers I seem to hear again an old melody that I know well—the echo of his father's words and daily devotions." How many of the boys and girls of this congregation hear father or mother praying with and for them? How many will link father's and mother's name in reverence their longest day with that of God, because, through what they have taught them and through what they have themselves been to them, they have come to know and honour the Most Highest?

The Bible has a method of placing our duties around us in a series of concentric circles; and, by training us to be faithful to those in the smallest and most immediate circles, of educating us to reach out and include the wider. The child's first circle is the home and the lesson to be learned there is *honour*. Not obedience merely, but the habit of looking up to others with consideration and respect for them as better than we, with deference to their

judgment and wishes—that is our first development in character. Unless it is learned in the first circle, it is likely never to be learned; and the life that never considers others, respects them and defers to their wishes is a pitiably distorted life. Carlyle was describing a Scottish rather than an American home when he wrote of his early days: "An inflexible element of authority surrounded us all. We felt from the first (a useful thing) that our own wish had often nothing to do in the matter." We want to educate not to break the will; and we want the co-operation, the willing agreement of children, in what we plan for them. But is there not an opposite extreme in many homes among ourselves, where children are allowed to exercise their wishes and whims, without being taught to consider and respect the wiser and maturer wishes of their elders? Children who are not trained to consider—and that means to respect and defer to the desires of their parents—grow up warped towards selfishness, to become unfit, largely because of their lack of considerateness, for marriage and friendship and all the social relationships of life.

A wider circle which surrounds the home is the land with its laws. "Honour thy father and thy mother" is succeeded by "honour the king"—respect constituted authority. A home which does not enforce its demands presents the state with lawless citizens. Many of those who deplore want of regard for law and order are producing little anarchists in their own households. Reverence for the will of the family, a will not arbitrarily and despotically imposed, but established by wise love over children who so far as possible are taught to see its wisdom and to feel its love, is the source of respect for the authority of a democracy, where the individual must submit himself to the will of the community which he is given his full share in forming.

And outside the circle of one's country lies the more inclusive circle which embraces the whole race. If the first commandment we learn to fulfil is "Honour thy father and thy mother," the last, which occupies us our life long, and which it may require some sections of eternity for us fully to master, is: "Honour all men." And unless in childhood we have learned to look up to somebody and have

caught that attitude so firmly that we cannot be bent or twisted out of it by all the circumstances of life that tempt us to look down on men, we have scant chance of acquiring it later. We are debarred from intimacies with men; for we only get near to them as we go *up* to them. We are handicapped in our sympathies, for sympathy begins with appreciation—a form of honour. We are likely to pass our days landlocked in a little puddle of our own prejudices, while the great ocean of human life lies outside, waiting to carry us to its many, many shores. We are seriously, if not fatally, crippled for the most sacred of human relations—marriage; for wedded happiness can only exist between two mutally reverencing beings. The word "honour" in the marriage service is fully as important as the word "love," and there can be no love worthy the name without honour. The child unschooled to honour father and mother will turn out the husband or wife that wrecks a home. And without this fundamental lesson we are cut off from all broadening and enriching contacts with other people; for we learn from them only as we look up to them; we draw out their best only

as we approach them with respect; we tempt them to show us their sacred things only as we make them sure that whatever is prized by them will be invariably revered by us. Yes, the source of all helpful and happy intercourse with other human beings whatsoever lies back in this primary home duty: "Honour thy father and thy mother."

And the circle of our duties does not stop with men; the circumference of our contacts goes out to the unseen and reaches the living God. Goethe makes Faust say: "The thrill of awe is man's best quality." Those of you who have seen Raphael's frescoes in the Vatican may have noticed that in the "Philosophical School" no face is looking up, while in the "Theological School" (The *Disputa*) opposite, every face is lifted. No man ever gets close to God save as he goes up to Him. Those who treat the Deity with the familiarity of an equal, or even venture to offer him their distinguished patronage, have not the remotest touch with the God and Father of Jesus Christ. Jesus dwelt in His Father's love, but He said "Hallowed be Thy name," "I thank Thee, Father, Lord." That is a striking saying of St. Paul's,

"I bow my knees unto the Father, of whom every fatherhood in heaven and on earth is named." The divine name is conferred on parents; they are to play Providence to their children, to ban or bless them. They are to represent the Divine, the honourable and adorable to them. Father or mother who do not deserve honour, foster irreligion and every other unhappiness in a child. Children who instinctively look up, because the beings they know first and best command their reverence, catch the attitude of spirit within whose ken in due time the Divine will swim, and the honour they have learned to give those who bore the fatherly name on earth will give itself fully to the great Father of all.

"Honour thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise) that it may be well with thee," and that thy days may be long in the earth with its enriching human relations, and longer still in the heavens with their hallowed fellowships that abide forever.

# THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT

## THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT

Exodus xx:13: *"Thou shalt not kill."*

There is almost an element of humour in preaching against murder to a congregation of respectable people like ourselves. Did we really think that the man in the next pew might possibly be "a gunman" or the woman across the aisle a prospective poisoner, how very uncomfortable we should feel! And if the preacher should say, "I have a special word this morning for those who have recently murdered someone," we should look about us with a shudder, and wonder what sort of company we had got into. It is well for us to remember that there are Christian congregations in some parts of the world—in Africa, in the Island of Formosa, among the head hunters in the Philippines—where pillars of the Church are former man-slayers. From the beginning the Gospel of Christ has not hesitated to deal with the most brutal elements of mankind. It sur-

prises us to hear Peter writing in his first epistle: "Let none of you suffer as a murderer." How could Christians need any such warning? Think out of what stuff the apostles had to manufacture Christians! And if murder appears to be so unthinkable to us that we smile at the thought of a sermon preached to us from the Sixth Commandment, let us not forget that we owe the security of our own lives in this community very largely to the work of the Christian Church in the past centuries, and to the prevalence of Christian ideals and sentiments throughout our land today. If these ideals became weaker in our own city, who knows what an increase in acts of violence we should witness? Home Missions is indirectly the most profitable form of life insurance.

The old Jewish legislation took cognizance of forms of murder other than deliberate killing. In the Book of Exodus we read: "If an ox gore a man or a woman to death, the ox shall be surely stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be quit. But if the ox was wont to gore in time past, and it hath been testified to its owner, and he

hath not kept it in, but it hath killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned, and its owner also shall be put to death." The responsibility of the owners—be they stockholders, or directors, or managers—for accidents, when they know that they have neglected proper precautions, is the modern equivalent of that ancient statute. The corporation, which in its eagerness for dividends allows grade-crossings to remain, or to remain unguarded, which does not introduce safety-appliances, which breaks the fire laws in its buildings, which permits unsanitary conditions to prevail in its plant, which caters to the desire for speed at the risk of disaster, which fails to insist on constant and careful inspection of machinery, workrooms, tracks, bridges and the like, is repeating the same perilous experiment of leaving a dangerous ox at large. Present-day legislators are trying to find a way by which they can make someone as personally liable as these ancient lawgivers held the ox's owner. Every preventable accident ought to mean that somebody will be punished; life cannot otherwise be adequately protected.

There are still other and subtler ways of

committing murder. Work may be paid so poorly that life cannot be supported on the wages. Long ago, Tom Hood wrote *The Song of the Shirt:*

Work—work—work,
  Till the brain begins to swim;
Work—work—work,
  Till the eyes are heavy and dim!
Seam and gusset and band,
  Band and gusset and seam,
Till over the buttons I fall asleep,
  And sew them on in a dream!

Work—work—work!
  My labour never flags;
And what are its wages? A bed of straw—
  A crust of bread—and rags.
That shattered roof—and this naked floor—
  A table—a broken chair—
And a wall so blank, my shadow I thank
  For sometimes falling there.

Oh God! that bread should be so dear,
  And flesh and blood so cheap!

And where human lives are used up in our commercial machinery, it is not easy to fix the blame. If we hold the employer, he will point out that his profits are not unreasonable, and that he is forced to keep his prices down by

keen competition; if we hold the department store, where the goods are sold, they, too, will remind us that business risks are great, and the pressure of rivals difficult to meet. The fact is that there is guilt which we all—public, middlemen, manufacturers—must share, and which, because our part of it seems a trifling fraction, we dare not minimize. The whole subject of "the living wage" is complicated, and must be handled with painstaking study; but it is for us as Christians to insist that it shall be handled, that it is the community's duty—our bounden duty, yours and mine—to see to it that labour is properly paid. "Thou shalt not kill."

Or again, work may not be obtainable, and starvation may face a willing toiler who cannot find employment. We believe in the right to live; we have not been as accustomed to assert the right to obtain the means to live, the right to work. When industries are affected by a world catastrophe such as that which is at present convulsing Europe, it is not surprising that there should be many thousands of unemployed men and women; but we have to confront the situation that without any such dis-

aster there is normally a large number of workless people every year among us. We have never thought that it was anybody's obligation to find them work; they were expected to seek it for themselves; and that was much more possible in our less crowded days. With the growth of the social conscience and the pressure of our vaster population we are commencing to feel that it is the community's duty to assist people to obtain employment. The problem is exceedingly difficult; among the unemployed there are always loafers, incompetents, and ne'er-do-weels; men trained to one line of labour cannot readily be shifted to another; many jobs are necessarily temporary, and labourers must move about if they are to keep employed. Some of our churches—our own, for instance—have not been able to solve the much simpler problem of getting churchless ministers and ministerless churches together; and the countrywide and worldwide problem of unemployment is bewilderingly difficult. But its solution will be forthcoming only as our consciences insist that social machinery shall be devised by which no willing worker need remain idle. It may not offer him the position

he would like, but it will guarantee him and his a livelihood, provided he is not too lazy to do a reasonable amount of hard labour. To the end of time the stimulus of hunger may have to be resorted to in the case of the sluggard, and we have Scriptural authority for such pressure in the apostle's statement: "If any will not work, neither let him eat"; but where any will work, the ancient commandment is addressed to us: "Thou shalt not kill."

Two, often debated, questions are raised in our minds by this injunction—capital punishment and war. To be sure, the commandment did not seem to those to whom it was given to interfere with either. The death penalty is prescribed by Israel's lawgivers for several offences, and Israel's greatest saints were frequently redoubtable warriors. But "time makes ancient good uncouth," and we are not living under the law of Moses, but under the Spirit of Jesus.

The Christian's interest in the treatment of the wrong-doer is not retribution—life for life; nor is it the protection of society by vindicating the sanctity of law and making a deterrent

example of the criminal. These were Old Testament interests: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made He man." But, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" is the prayer Jesus puts on the lips of Christian society. We are to be merciful as our God is merciful, just as He is just. His mercy is transforming; His justice is redemptive. His love is no good-natured sentiment that allows itself to be imposed on, but a passionate devotion that does not cease to strive to make His children righteous. One who has deliberately taken another's life cannot be left where he may do the like again, nor can he be allowed to remain without the severest discipline requisite to give him a right conscience, self-control and a brotherly heart. But to put him in an electric chair is simply a short and easy way for society to rid itself of a menace, and to absolve itself from attempting the self-sacrificing labour necessary to make over a murderer into a child of God. "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Be ye therefore merciful as your Father is merciful."

Nor can war ever commend itself to the Christian conscience. How can anyone point a rifle, or drop a bomb, or plant a mine, "in the name of Jesus"? And it is written, "Whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do *all* in the name of the Lord Jesus." What we cannot do in His name, we are not to do at all.

But we must remember an expression which Jesus used in connection with His command, "Swear not at all." He was insisting that among Christians a man's word should be so reliable that all oaths would be superfluous, and He said "Whatsoever is more *cometh of evil,*" meaning that in an evil world an oath might be expedient, but must be recognised as due to evil. War cometh of evil, and as Christians we must see to it that we do nothing to make it come. But when war comes upon a land, there is nothing for Christians but to take arms and do their part in defending themselves and theirs from attack. We cannot be saved from evil until all others are saved with us; and while evil persists, driving men to strife, it is not the part of Christian love, either to the invaders or to those who look to us for protection, to let the assailants wreak their purpose

upon us. But let us make clear that slaughter of our brethren is inherently incompatible with the mind of Christ; it cometh only of evil.

In a world like ours we often face merely a choice of evils; neither alternative is entirely Christian. In 1861 our fathers faced the issue of slavery or war; and to-day few men, South or North, regret that war was chosen, the issue settled, and slavery banished from the land. Our brethren overseas have been confronted by what seemed to them a similar choice of evils; it is not for us to judge them, that we be not judged; but to hope and pray that this frightful wholesale killing will once and for all relegate war to the class of unthinkable solutions of differences of opinion, as among ourselves the duel is gone forever.

Jesus dealt explicitly with this ancient commandment. "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment; but I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca (good-for-nothing), shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say,

Thou fool (worthless wretch), shall be in danger of the hell of fire." Jesus is, of course, not giving a new law that is to be enacted into statutes, as the Mosaic commandments were made the common law of Israel. He is giving His followers ideals and standards. "You have been told not to murder; I tell you not to be angry with anyone, not to be contemptuous of anyone as a stupid fellow, not to condemn anyone as morally worthless." It is His way of getting at the underlying principle of the old commandment. "Thou shalt not kill" asserts the sanctity of a human being because he is made in the image of God. Jesus tells us that there are other ways of violating that sanctity than by putting him to death. One is losing your temper in dealing with him. You may not say a word; you may control both tongue and facial expression; but in thought you have no use for him. That for Jesus is ungodliness, because God has use for this man; God cherishes no such irritated feeling. Another is letting out some rather mild expression derogatory of the other man's ability. Raca seems to mean little worse than "You stupid"; it does not imply contempt for a man's charac-

ter, only for his head or his skill. That, too, for Jesus is ungodlike, for God has made no human being good for nothing. A third is calling a man a scoundrel, a moral reprobate. Such is the Hebrew significance of "fool." That is ungodlike, for none is morally worthless; there are possibilities of good in the lowest. Jesus is concerned with our *feelings* towards men, for "from within out of the heart of man proceed murders."

Let us remind ourselves what Jesus has succeeded in accomplishing in rendering human beings sacred to each other. There is no more striking chapter in the record of the moral progress of mankind than that which treats of the new ideas of the sanctity of human life that entered the world with the spread of Christianity. In the Roman world, as in the non-Christian world to-day, an unborn child was not protected against death by abortion; but the new feeling that here was an immortal child of the Father in heaven enacted legislation which is operative to this day. Nor was there any sentiment against disposing of a new-born baby, when its parents did not wish to rear it. Until very recently a cart went about the

streets of Pekin gathering up the bodies of dead infants whose families chose to throw them out rather than keep them alive. Rome, for military reasons, sought to insist that all healthy male babies should be kept; but the deformed or weakly and all female babies might be exposed with impunity. The new Christian conscience battled for centuries for the lives of little children; it battles still in the campaign to safeguard their health, to protect them from infection, to guarantee the city's milk supply, to assure even the foundling a home and an upbringing. And, perhaps more shocking to our minds, was the passion for the gladiatorial shows, where men from all parts of the world fought each other to death or combated with wild beasts for the amusement of the populace. "The extinction of the gladiatorial spectacles," writes Mr. Lecky, "is, of all the results of early Christian influence, that upon which the historian can look with the deepest and most unmingled satisfaction. Horrible as was the bloodshed they directly caused, these games were perhaps still more pernicious on account of the callousness of feeling they diffused through all classes, the

fatal obstacle they presented to any general elevation of humanity. Yet the attitude of the pagans decisively proves that no progress of philosophy or social civilisation was likely, for a very long period, to have extirpated them, and it can hardly be doubted that, had they been flourishing unchallenged as in the days of Trajan, when the rude warriors of the North obtained the empire of Italy, they would have been eagerly adopted by the conquerors, would have taken deep root in mediæval life, and have indefinitely retarded the progress of humanity. Christianity alone was powerful enough to tear this evil plant from the Roman soil." We have still a task of the same character to perform in doing away with every exhibition of brutality for the sake of amusement. The present war has vastly increased the interest in military and naval operations; more children than ever are playing soldiers and sailors. Most of such play is harmless enough and a necessary form of letting children live through a section, a pitifully long section, of the race's experience; and most pictures of battles will help to increase the loathing we have for the whole butcherlike business of blood-

shed; but our consciences need to be on the alert against anything whatsoever that tends to brutalise and render callous the hearts of men. Reverence for human beings as children of God, to be loved, honoured, served—that is the attitude followers of Jesus are set to make universal.

And as for Christ's own apparently impossible ideal which excludes an irritated thought or expression; it did not in His own case hinder Him from feeling strongly and expressing Himself with ample vigour with regard to those who stood in the way of the Kingdom of love. He called Herod a fox and the Pharisees hypocrites; He drove the money-changers from the Temple with a scourge. But all the while one feels that He respected the manhood of those He was forced to attack. His very invective is witness of the higher and better expectations He cherished of them. Honour men sufficiently as children of God, and we can speak frankly of that about them in which they dishonour themselves. Our peril lies in losing the love that believeth and hopeth all things, in feeling that some are not worth helping. It is this giving up of any man as too trying, or

too dull, or too bad, that Jesus condemns as the violation of the old statute against murder: "Thou shalt not kill."

There is still another application of this commandment: "Thou shalt not kill thyself." Many college debating societies have threshed out the question, "Is suicide ever justifiable?" We need not discuss the hypothetical question. To Christians a man's life is not his own: it belongs to God and to those to whom God has given him. No man has the right to end it for himself. But there are many more ways of committing suicide than by cutting one's throat or turning on the gas jet. We talk sometimes of "killing time"; but during any section of time there is an epoch of life, and to kill time is to slay some part of self and what self should have done. Or we speak of someone as "throwing himself away"; that which he does is not worthy of him, and under such circumstances part of a man, and the best part of him, is not really alive; he is a partial suicide. Or we say of ourselves, excusing our dulness or want of poise and patience: "I'm not myself to-day." What have we done with our self? There are times when physical weakness or nervous

strain will make it impossible for us to bring our whole mind and heart and will into action; but there are often times when the lower ideals about us intrude and take possession and we are not ourselves. Such intrusions are temporary suicides; and the peril is that they may become permanent.

The most tragic figure in Christian history is just such a suicide. Judas Iscariot was once man enough to appreciate Jesus of Nazareth. He gave Him his sincere loyalty and obedience. He went the length of attaching himself to that company of devoted men that moved wherever the Master went. We have no reason to think that Jesus did not welcome and trust him, exactly as He did the rest. And Judas heard the parables which Matthew heard, and watched the acts of self-giving kindness which Peter saw, and shared the intimate friendship of the Master which John knew. But there came these intrusions of other ideals, and Judas did not close the door to them. Probably his disloyalties were very trifling to begin with—a little something false here and a small disobedience there; and gradually Jesus saw that Judas was no longer himself. And the killing process

went on until at last we see a desperate man knotting a cord about his own neck and making his own ghastly end. A man's life consisteth not in the things that he possesses, but in that which possesses him. To have seen one's highest and not to let it keep complete mastery of us, is the road to suicide. To have felt the spell of Jesus Christ, to appreciate Him and yield Him one's loyalty, but not to let Him keep that allegiance completely, leads to self-destruction. "Thou shalt not kill."

# THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT

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Exodus xx:14: *"Thou shalt not commit adultery."*

The commandment which safeguards human life is followed by this commandment which protects the family and asserts the sanctity of the marriage tie. The connection of the two commandments suggests that home is the next most sacred thing to life itself.

In dealing with the Scriptural teaching upon marriage it is important that we make clear to ourselves in what sense we accept the Bible as authoritative. If we consider it, as it is widely considered among Protestant Christians, a divine book equally inspired in all its parts, we shall arrive at a very confused ideal of wedded life. At times the Old Testament holds up a high standard of what husband and wife should mean to each other and condemns severely the vice of impurity; at other times it commends, as "after God's own heart," men whose lives seem to us profligate, and gives explicit teaching that has been used to justify

Mormonism; and even the New Testament occasionally presents a low ideal. If we wish to gain a clearly Christian view of marriage, we are compelled to take the theory that the Bible is the record of the gradual evolution of standards, and must be read with discriminating eyes that distinguish loftier from lower ideals; nor dare we hesitate to affirm that the Bible writers are by no means unerring guides, but must be corrected by the supreme Christian authority—the Spirit of Christ in Christian consciences.

Jesus Himself, in handling the Old Testament, said that Moses in his law of divorce had compromised the divine intention. And we, using our Lord's liberty, must confess that St. Paul was not consistent with his own Christian principles in treating marriage. We may excuse his personal depreciation of wedded life by reminding ourselves of the hardships of the missionary career that made it inexpedient for him, and particularly of his firm belief that the world was shortly to end so that home and family ties appeared not worth forming; but we have to recognise that he never seems to have grasped the true union of man and wife

as comrades in faith and purpose. Instead of abiding by his own statement that men and women are equal in Christ, he is bound by his traditional Pharisaic theology that man is superior to woman, because man was made directly in God's image, while woman was only copied from man. Instead of summing up the wife's obligation to be, like the husband's, to love (although Paul himself believed that love was the fulfilling of the law), he insists that it is to obey.

While the Bible, when read with critical discrimination, contains valuable teaching on this subject, the Christian ideal is stated satisfactorily only in Jesus Himself. He is convinced that marriage is normally the divine purpose: "Have ye not read that He who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, a man shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh." He swept His keen eye over the convictions of the past and the experiences of men and women around Him, and recognised marriage as the necessary completion and enrichment of the normal life. But He saw that there were exceptions. Under a metaphor that sounds

coarse to our modern ears, and was not meant by Him to be taken literally, He speaks of some as constitutionally not adapted for marriage, and of others as deliberately remaining single for the Kingdom's sake. In the latter class He may have been thinking of John the Baptist, or of some of His own disciples; or He may be giving us a bit of autobiography and uncovering His own personal decision. And it is significant that this choice seemed to Him a great sacrifice. He appreciated so fully the glory of the companionship of true husband and wife, that to forego marriage was to Him an heroic demand justified only by exceptional circumstances: "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it."

And because He prized the wedded tie so highly any breach of it by divorce was intolerable to Him. "What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." The exception which the Gospel of Matthew inserts in His saying almost certainly does not come from Him, but was an interpretation of His teaching for practical use in the Church of the second generation. Jesus did not lay down a law to be enacted by legislatures, nor even

by Church courts; He held up the Christian ideal for his followers.

Unfortunately His teaching is much oftener appealed to in discussions on divorce than on marriage. His own interest is in the establishment of a divine relation between husband and wife—"those whom God hath joined together." Jesus was an enthusiast for man; He saw more in human beings than any one ever saw before Him; He believed us capable of higher things than anyone else dared to believe: "Ye shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." So He believed that human relations could be made divinely ideal. Marriage was the union of man and woman in all their godlike capacities; they must be joined together in body, mind, conscience and faith, or they were not united by God.

The prevalent agitation against the increasing evil of broken homes usually concerns itself with the wrong end of the problem. We need not so much a new conscience about divorce as about marriage.

Many marriages are matters of calculation; wife or husband is considered a desirable convenience. A man may be anxious to have a

home of his own, or may feel himself lonely, or may think marriage would help him in his business, or may want somebody to care for his comforts; a woman may want greater freedom than is usually accorded an unmarried girl, or may be eager to leave the parental home, or may wish to be supported, or may feel a certain reproach that foolishly attaches to girls who remain single beyond a certain age, or may have a craving for motherhood. None of these motives is bad in itself; but none is an adequate reason for marriage. In a recent study of the Brontë sisters is an interesting proposal that was made to Charlotte Brontë. It came from her best friend's brother, a Church of England curate, who had made up his mind that he ought to secure a wife. He first asked the daughter of his former vicar, whom in his diary he characterises as "a steady, intelligent, sensible and, I trust, good girl named Mary." She refused him, and he enters in his diary "On Tuesday last received a decisive reply from M. A. L.'s papa; a loss, but I trust a providential one. Believe not her will but her father's. Write to a Yorkshire friend, C. B." Shortly after occurs the record, "Received an unfavourable

reply from C. B. The will of the Lord be done." If the man had only been anything like as anxious and intelligent in trying to do God's will in seeking a wife, as in accepting piously his well-merited refusals, there might have been some chance of his forming a Christian marriage. What true union of heart with heart, purpose with purpose, could there be in such matter-of-fact proposing with no more apparent feeling than is usually displayed in visiting an intelligence office?

Or at the other extreme, marriages are made by an unthinking sentimental attraction. Dr. Johnson, in his now seldom read romance, *Rasselas,* writes: "A youth and a maiden, meeting by chance or brought together by artifice, exchange glances, reciprocate civilities, go home and dream of each other. Having little to divert attention or diversify thought, they find themselves uneasy apart, and therefore conclude that they shall be happy together. They marry and discover what nothing but voluntary blindness before had concealed." Judgment, as well as sentiment, must be wedded. Our much freer American way of letting young people meet and see much of

each other is a long step towards helping them to find out whether, besides sentimental attraction, they are intelligently drawn together in purpose and conscience.

Worst of all, perhaps, is the marriage entered upon because man or woman resolves to be married. Girls sometimes are in love with the idea of being in love; men marry because they make up their minds to marry. In the biography of Tschaikowsky, the Russian composer, we are told that he had a genuine love affair with an opera singer who chose to marry another man. Afterwards he wrote to his brother: "I have decided to marry; this is irrevocable," and again, "I have been thinking of my future; the result is my firm resolution to enter into the state of matrimony with someone or other." The following May he became engaged to a girl who had fallen in love with him. He told her he could not love her; but would be a devoted friend; he described his character in detail—his irritability, his changeable temperament, his antipathy to people, his financial condition; and asked her to become his wife. She accepted, and after a few unhappy months they separated. The musi-

cian wrote: "A few days more and I swear I would have gone insane." There was no quarrel; the composer struggled, as he writes, to recognise all her good qualities, and she prepared a home for him which he liked and occupied for a short time. The biographer simply tells us that there was "an abyss of misunderstandings between the two."

A Christian marriage occurs only when two lives touch completely. It has in it the vehemence and fervour and tenderness, which we sum up in the special sense of our most sacred word "love." The passion may come gradually or suddenly, but it brings always an experience so transforming that it seems a second birth. A new world comes into being for lovers. We may think them blind to each other's faults, but it is only because love has opened their eyes to see in each other what none else, save God Himself, can see. They idealise each other; but that idealisation is love's way of reaching and bringing out the real self within. They honour each other supremely; each is incomparable to the other's mind. In each other they find themselves, as they never found themselves before. A Chris-

tian can never find himself in another unless the other possesses at least the capacity for his loyalties, his ideals, his faith. Lives that touch at a number of points, but remain utterly remote at what is to one the supreme point, are not divinely joined together. Paul had insight enough to urge that Christians marry "in the Lord"—both lives controlled by the Spirit of Jesus. The Old Testament saying, our Lord singled out as descriptive of man's attitude towards God, is none too strong to describe the attitude of Christian husband and wife: they must love with all their heart, soul, mind and strength. So, and only so, does God, who is love, join them together.

To be sure the peculiar intensity of the first affection that unites them may not remain constantly. The routine of life which man and wife must share will expose in each many unlovely qualities. They may begin to question whether, after all, they may not have made a mistake, whether they really love each other. But love is for Christians loyalty. God loves us not because we are invariably attractive to Him—far from it; He loves us because He once idealised us, saw our possibilities as His

children, and remains true to that insight, despite all we do to the contrary. It is a tragic situation when husband or wife must live for years holding fast to a gleam from the past that never seems to shine again in the companion of to-day; but that is the loyalty required of Christian love; it is the loyalty of Christ to us, and it is the loyalty of His God and Father.

And a loyalty that will go all lengths is needed to take husband and wife the much shorter distances of mutual concession and forgiveness and patience, that must be travelled even by those whose lives seem supremely happy. None of us is always at his best; most of us come anywhere near it only at rare intervals. Temper is but partially in control; everyone is unreasonable about some things; each has a full stock of foibles and weaknesses that must be borne with; there are numerous chances for wills to clash, even for consciences to differ. A love that has to be kept alive by the attractiveness, or even by the responding affection of the other, will not suffice; love must have loyalty within itself that is independent of present stimulus or response. And there may come experiences when it will be called

on to bear, believe, hope, endure all things; that is love's lot in our world. And only a love that is capable of an immeasurable loyalty to the ideal self, which it has once seen and known and honoured, is adequate for the strain. To such love the breaking of the relation will be as intolerable as to Jesus Himself. That is Christian marriage. Of man and woman so united we can say "What God hath joined together."

The extent to which it is feasible or desirable to make legislation enforce on an entire population the Christian ideal is a very complex question. When so many men and women marry for motives that make it impossible to say that they are united by God, it becomes a question of expediency to determine under what circumstances man may, and perhaps ought, to put them asunder. In this country we are suffering from an overdeveloped and undisciplined individualism. People feel that they can marry as they please, and ought not to be held together if the bond seems irksome. Much nonsense is talked about the cruelty of enforced self-suppression. No one ever finds himself until he loses himself for a larger

whole; and society must be held up before people's consciences as of more importance than their personal happiness or comfort or convenience.

Obviously the State must do its best to safeguard marriage, and insist that it is a privilege open only to those who possess reasonable health and intelligence, and enter upon it with proper deliberation; but legislation can produce but clumsy contrivances when the real fitness is a matter of heart. When barriers to marriage are enacted, corresponding gates are opened to immorality. Probably none of us would wish a more stringent divorce law than that which stands on the statutes of New York at present; many think it too stringent. There should be uniform laws throughout our land, for it is absurd to have that which is illegal in one state made legal for those who have sufficient money to travel to another. But we dare not hope for very much from legislation. We must rely on spreading the Christian social conscience, the conscience that in loyalty to children will endure almost everything from *their* father or mother; and, where the endurance point is past, will certainly not ask for

more than separation; the conscience that in loyalty to that which love has once revered will be willing to suffer and wait and hope for years, and to forgive with the amazing forgiveness of that Old Testament prophet who took back his wife, and the mother of his children, after she had spent years in a life of shame. We are far from that social conscience yet; but as Christians we must set our eyes toward it for ourselves and our land.

Nor is it easy to determine to what extent the Church should try to put into her rules the ideal of Jesus. *The Gospel of Matthew* shows how very early the Church felt impelled to adapt the ideal to circumstances. Our Lord has not left us a fixed law, but a living Spirit. When a marriage has been irreparably broken, and we are dealing with the person who seems to have been more sinned against than sinning, and when no injustice is being done to children and the ideal of marriage itself is not being flouted and degraded, it is a fair question whether it is the mind of the Spirit of Christ not to further and bless a second attempt to establish a true wedded life. Shall we say that the evangelist who adapted the words of

Jesus to the Church situation of his day was not inspired by the Spirit of the Master? And has not the Church of to-day the same right to be freely led by the same Spirit? Our main task is to train Christians who will not marry save when so divinely impelled that of them we have a right to say: "What God hath joined together let not man put asunder." But, in a world of imperfect knowledge and faulty consciences, it may be also the Church's duty to help the bitterly disappointed and cruelly abused to realise the divine ideal in a second attempt at marriage, when the first has proved a hopeless failure.

Jesus gave this ancient commandment an interpretation all His own when He told His followers that for us an impure look or thought was to be shunned as adultery. And Jesus has succeeded in giving the world in His faith and ideals its strongest purifying force. Origen, centuries ago, could answer the objections of the heathen Celsus by appealing to well known facts: "The work of Jesus," he wrote, "reveals itself among all mankind where communities of God founded by Jesus exist, which are composed of men reclaimed from a

thousand vices; and to this day the name of Jesus produces decency of manners." We have constant need to insist on that decency. Christians cannot be too careful in refusing to patronise amusements, or to have anything to do with papers or books, that are not absolutely clean. Information about all sorts of disgusting vices is not conducive to pure thinking. There are some things we can well afford to know nothing about. Of such practices, all too common in his day, Paul writes "let them not even be named among you as becometh those set apart."

A recent teacher has followed Christ's method of applying an ugly word to what many of us are tempted to think trivial, in order to bring home to our consciences its intrinsic evil. Dr. Cabot of Boston has pointed out that the essential sin in prostitution is treating a person impersonally—as a mere thing. And he wishes us to label all impersonal treatment of people *prostitution.* How widespread that sin is among the most respectable! The relation of employers and employed are often impersonal—housekeepers think of a maid merely as cook or waitress, not

as a sister in the family of God with aspirations, feelings, ideals, convictions; manufacturers regard those who sit at their machines as so many hands, and make no effort to deal with them as minds and consciences and souls; employees regard their employer or foreman merely as "the boss," with no consideration for the man; all of us accept a great quantity of services from a number of people without letting any outgo of ourselves reach them. This is as essentially prostitution, as the impure thought is adultery; it is the degradation of personality. We can all feel whether we are dealt with as persons or as things—mere factors in the convenience or advance or life-background of another. And what we feel, others can feel in their dealings with us. Purity between lives is safeguarded only by reverence for the child of God in every man and woman. The shame of thousands of women in our own city is but the outcome of the impurity of heart that fails to personalise every touch of life with life. And who of us is guiltless?

For us, believing men and women, the glory of human wedlock shines most brilliantly

when we use it, as generations of believers have used it before us, as a symbol of God's relationship to man. "Thy Maker is thy Husband." For the divine union exalts and sanctifies the human tie. "Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, even so ought husbands to love their wives," writes a Christian apostle. It was God's merciful and unalterably loyal love for His people that led Hosea to forgive and take back Gomer, his faithless wife. The divine Husband became an irresistible ideal for the human husband. We take all the wealth we have discovered in our richest home experiences, and let it be to us a suggestion of what we may expect from God. We think of the devotion, the patience, the tenderness, the trust, the allegiance, given us by our nearest and dearest; and we look up to the heavens in faith and expect nothing less, when we say to ourselves, "God is love." And so far from failing us, we discover that our highest anticipations, based on human affection, are too small. God outdoes man's or woman's best; and he sends husband

and wife back from their experience of Him to fill the cup of their mutual obligations with a fuller measure, because of the overflowing heart they have found in Him. We learn love's meaning first in our most tender human relations; but the highest definition these give us proves inadequate when we try to put into it all that God's devotion means to us. "Hereby perceive we love, because He laid down His life for us." The Calvary of long ago o'ertops the loftiest summit of devotion we know anywhere else. And from our experience of divine redeeming love we draw inspirations for that tender loyalty which crowns the union of man and wife.

# THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

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Exodus xx: 15: *"Thou shalt not steal."*

The Decalogue runs in a suggestive sequence; one after another follow commandments safeguarding life, family, property. It surprises some to find the sanctity of possessions placed beside the sanctity of life and home. Religion is interested not in things but in persons; yes, but property is essential to persons. No man can realise his personality without possessions. Just as marriage is held sacred for the sake of persons for whose perfecting home is necessary, property is protected because of its value for the characters of men. Like life itself, property is indispensable to train human beings into true children of God.

Two fundamental religious convictions underlie the Bible's attitude towards possessions. The first is that all things belong to God, and their human owners hold them only as His representatives for the time being. When

David passes over to Solomon the materials he has collected for the building of the Temple, he is represented as saying: "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine. Both riches and honour come of Thee, and Thou rulest over all; and in Thine hand it is to make great and to give strength unto all. All this store that we have prepared to build Thee an house for Thine holy name cometh of Thine hand, and is Thine own. O Lord, keep this forever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of Thy people, and establish their heart unto Thee." This prayer connects God's ownership with the fleeting character of human life: "For we are strangers before Thee, and sojourners, as all our fathers were," so that man's proprietorship of anything must be temporary. "We brought nothing into this world, neither can we carry anything out." God's it was, and His it remains. As Job said when possessions and family were gone: "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away."

The second is that God gives the earth to mankind as a family, and it is therefore family property: "The earth hath He given to the

children of men." The Old Testament horizon is limited usually to Israel; all possessions belong to the nation, and each Israelite is entitled to his share in the national heritage. In theory a man's land could not be taken in perpetuity from him and his, but must be returned in the Year of Jubilee. In order to remind owners that their fields were not primarily theirs but the nation's, they were bidden not to reap their harvests thoroughly, but to leave the gleanings for the poor. When economic pressure created a landless and dependent class, the prophets protested that the religious ideal of brotherhood was infringed upon: "Jehovah will enter into judgment with the elders and princes of His people. It is ye that have eaten up the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses. What mean ye that ye crush my people, and grind the face of the poor?" and again, "Woe unto those who join house to house, who add field to field, till there is no more room, and ye are settled alone in the midst of the land." Their indignation is not so much that a few have amassed great wealth, although there are protests against wasteful luxury and display, but that many of the peo-

ple are without property, and the possessionless cannot develop morally as they would had they their share in the national domain. After the Exile Nehemiah insists that the well-to-do shall restore to every Israelite his small ancestral holding, so that none shall be without the means to have a home and a livelihood.

The New Testament discloses these two convictions firmly imbedded in Christian minds, but God's fatherhood of all men takes away the barriers that usually confined Old Testament thought to Israel. Earth and its contents is the Father's house with bread enough and to spare for His children. God gives men all things richly to enjoy, so that they are meant to possess and take pleasure in things. Jesus' personal poverty has been over-emphasised; for the greater part of His adult life He worked as a carpenter, and enjoyed a comfortable home in Nazareth; and although later His special task prevented Him from following a remunerative calling, He gladly accepted the hospitality of the relatively wealthy, lived in some disciple's house in Capernaum, and received the gifts of generous and grateful adherents. He heartily delighted in life's good

things, so that critics found a basis for calling Him glutton and winebibber.

In His teaching, too, men are to recognise that the title to things is vested primarily in the brotherhood, whose collective prayer is, "Give *us* this day *our* daily bread." No Christian is expected to ask for himself what he does not as eagerly seek for everybody else. So strong was this sense of brotherhood in the early days of Christian enthusiasm that men freely placed their possessions at the disposal of the Christian community. No one was compelled to give up his property, and his right to keep it was recognised; "While it remained," Peter says to Ananias about his possession, "did it not remain thine own and after it was sold, was it not in thy power?" There was no deliberately planned communism; but, moved by the spirit of brotherhood, "none said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own"; and, in that sense, "they had all things common."

Jesus laid stress on two principles connected with the tenure of property. One was that His followers' hearts must be detached from things: "A man's life consisteth not in the

abundance of things which he possesseth." It was that detachment rather than a love of poverty that made Him urge the young ruler to sell all that he had. Riches are in His mind perils; they are apt to render their possessors self-sufficient, self-important, self-indulgent—the opposite of the spirit which rules in the Kingdom of Heaven. A man with large wealth almost invariably trusts in it to help him through crises, instead of putting his confidence in something higher. He is likely to become domineering, because many persons defer to him, and to feel that his wealth entitles his opinion to consideration. He is under great pressure to indulge himself, to think much of his own comfort, pleasure, convenience, and to be unbraced for daily personal sacrifice and hard labour. Jesus emphasises the danger in the striking metaphor: "It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." Of which passage Coleridge once wrote: "Often as the motley reflexes of my experience move in long processions of manifold groups before me, the distinguished and world-honoured company of Christian Mammonials appear to the

eye of my imagination as a drove of camels heavily laden, yet all at full speed, and each in the confident expectation of passing through the eye of the needle, without stop or halt, both beast and baggage."

The other principle is that of stewardship of everything that a man possesses. Whatever a Christian owns must be used for the service of human need, through which alone he serves his Lord: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these My brethren, ye did it unto Me." Obviously Jesus presupposes that a Christian has some private property; if there were nothing which he called his own, what could he use in the service of the brotherhood as their trustee under God? Jesus, no less than the Old Testament, considered property necessary to the attainment of personality as a child of God. When St. Paul is handling a thief, he tells him first to labour that he may *have;* the possession of property is essential to training his conscience in responsibility. And second, he is to labour to have that he may *give* to him that is in need. The thief's Christian training is not complete until he is serving the brotherhood. And such service is not charity in the sense of

gratuitous generosity on the part of the giver; it is justice, for possessors owe their brethren whatever they need, so far as it lies in their power to meet that need. "Whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?"

To sum up, from the Christian point of view all property belongs primarily to God, and secondarily to society as the family of God, whose duty it is to see that each child of the Father has a share of his own in the family heritage, which he is to use as his Father's steward for the needs of the family, recognising their claim upon him and his.

In that summary, there are three sets of duties—God's, society's, the individual's. Let us examine them in order.

1. God as Father is under obligation to provide for His children, and to see to it that there is enough in His world for everybody. As Christians we believe that God can be relied on to do His duty. When we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," we are confident that He answers with a supply sufficient for His whole household. If it be in His power

and He fails to provide for us, we can say to Him: "Thou shalt not steal." He lays no duties on our consciences which He does not lay upon His own, for He asks us to be perfect as He is perfect. If, then, there is want, we must put it down to our bad management, not to a genuine lack. We are not encouraged to pray: "Give us this day our daily cake"; it is not a wise father's part to pamper his children; but we are encouraged to ask with assurance for bread for all, *our* bread. Many economists go on the assumption that large masses of men must live on the verge of starvation always; and most of us are brought up to believe that want is the inevitable lot of millions. Wealth and poverty are, to be sure, relative terms, and there will always be richer and poorer people; but no Christian can assent to the notion that earth is so constituted that many must necessarily be nearly starving. That would argue a niggardly God, and we believe in One who openeth His hand and satisfieth the desire of every living thing. In a world where sickness, accident and death are present we shall always have the poor with us, as Jesus said; but poverty, in the sense of ac-

tual want among the well and capable, must always appear to the Christian as a human blunder and sin, man's defeat of God's intention.

2. It is society's duty to see that each individual born into the world has a portion of the family heritage that he can call his own. This in the eyes of the Bible writers is a religious necessity. A man without private property cannot serve God through his fellow men, for he lacks the means adequately to express himself. A certain amount of things is needed for self-attainment. The great movement which begins Israel's history was a labour movement on the part of people who felt that as slaves without possessions they could not exercise their religion. "The Lord spake unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Let My people go, *that they may serve Me.*" The divine plan for humanity is the education of men into independent and reliant sons of God; that cannot be so long as they are economically dependent. If a man is a slave, whose work or idleness is not in his own power, who has no chance to use his conscience in his labour, and cannot express his

personality in initiative, in perseverance, in thrift, in loving service, he is hindered from attaining Christian manhood. And Israel, born into national life in this struggle for industrial freedom, took care to safeguard in its laws each man's right to work, and to protect him in the possession of his tools: "No man shall take the mill or the upper mill-stone to pledge; for he taketh a man's life to pledge." That with which a man earns his living must be as sacredly kept his, as the community protects his life. Unless a man is assured his chance to work and the means with which to work, there is no guarantee that he can keep any private property, and private property is essential to his life in fellowship with God.

Under modern conditions it is by no means easy to devise a system by which society can secure each man his chance to work and guarantee his owning something. When a man earns his living by operating a machine, or working in a mine, or selling goods over a counter, or keeping books in an office, which belongs to others, it is not so simple to safeguard his chance to labour, as when he merely had to be protected from the loss of a couple of

millstones. The Bible sets forth no economic programme, and all attempts to read into it socialism or communism, or any other industrial theory are mistaken; but it lays down religious principles which each age must use its conscience and intelligence to embody in the social organisation of its day. And it is our duty as Christians to appreciate that private property is indispensable to religion, that no man can be a steward save as he can call something his own, and that this private tenure of possessions is not secure save as men and women are guaranteed the means and opportunity to labour. The Christian criticism of things as they are is not that a few have vast possessions, but that far too many have none. Men and women of large means can be trained to be good stewards, although a large fortune constitutes a very serious problem for its possessor, and we ought to recognise that, as a Christian, he faces one of the hardest tasks allotted to any man. But persons with nothing cannot be trained in responsibility. It is difficult to give them a share in the civic conscience. Possessing no stake in the country, they do not feel an obligation for its welfare,

and having nothing to lose, they welcome any change and are always open-eared for radical agitation. Furthermore, Christianity has little meaning for them, and its adherents appear to them hypocrites. It inculcates brotherhood; but where for them is there brotherliness in a community, rich in possessions and opportunities, that offers them no sure chance to earn a living and maintain for themselves and theirs a home? It proclaims that God is Father, and His fatherliness is to be known in His care for His children; but where can they feel God's personal interest in them when they have no lot in the family inheritance?

Christ nowhere teaches that all men are to have *equal* shares of anything; His parable of the talents presupposes an uneven distribution of possessions; but under existing conditions far too many have no part at all in the household's goods. A child born into a Christian world must be assured the chance to labour that he may *have,* that he may *give.* Until society secures the right to private property for every sane and healthy man and woman, we are stealing from them, depriving them of their due share in God's endowment of the family of

man. And society needs to be told, "Thou shalt not steal."

Further, it is society's duty to insist that no possessor shall employ his means in a way that is harmful to the general good. It must impress on every private owner that his property is primarily the family's; and that it is his only in so far as his control of it is for the family's interest. We allow a man to build his own house, and accord him fullest liberty in designing and arranging it that he may express his individuality; but we insist that its plans shall not violate the fire laws or menace the public health. We face in the social control of private property the delicate problem of affording the individual sufficient liberty to express his unique self (and that must imply freedom to do a good many things that seem to conventional minds foolish or even wicked), while we safeguard the interests of society as a whole.

There are wide differences of opinion between those who lay the stress on social rights and those who emphasise individual freedom. As Christians we have no ready-made solution to offer; the proper harmony of both prin-

ciples will doubtless take us a long while to establish, exactly as in political organisation we are slowly harmonising vigorous personal initiative on the part of leaders and private citizens with adequate democratic control. But as Christians we must hold up the two principles: society's duty to accord every man private property for self-expression as a child of God, and society's duty to insist that each child recognise the prior claims of the whole family and use his property for the well-being of his brethren.

3. The individual's duty is first of all to remember that whatever he owns is given him by God through society. We could own nothing, except by our sheer physical force to take and keep it, were it not for the community's protection of our rights through its laws. And if we are allowed the use and enjoyment of possessions, it is because we are presumed to employ them for the good of the brotherhood. A man's income, and all that it enables him to purchase, is in a very real sense a salary paid him by society for the services that he is supposed to render. It makes no difference how that income comes to him, whether through in-

herited wealth, or the labour of others, or through his own efforts; it is a portion of the family's riches placed at his disposal, and society is justified in making that outlay on him only in so far as he makes a commensurate return in usefulness to his brethren.

It is a searching and sobering question for our consciences whether you and I are worth our keep to the family of God. We must total up what it costs to feed, clothe, educate, house, amuse, inspire us; and ask ourselves whether we perform an adequate service in view of the salary society allows us. There are many of us who are freed from laborious drudgery because others attend to this for us. We are released from the hardest physical strain and the dirtiest and most disagreeable labour, while others remain hewers of wood and drawers of water—fishermen braving the perils and exposures of winter off the banks of Newfoundland, lonely lightship-keepers tossing day and night on the waves, drivers of the garbage wagons in our city streets, "sandhogs" subjected to the diseases and confined to the unpleasant surroundings of toil underground and under our rivers. Is our release from

such tasks justified by the beneficent achievements of our liberated time and energy? If one rides in an automobile, while the majority of his fellow-citizens are compelled to use less swift and comfortable means of transit, his contribution to the public good must be correspondingly greater, or society is not warranted in the larger expenditure it is according him. For everything that we use or enjoy—the clothes on our backs, the comforts of our dwellings, the leisure at our disposal, the amusements that entertain us, the intellectual stimulus and training given us, the religious inspirations we receive—we must make a corresponding payment in service to the family of God's children. "Thou shalt not steal."

In thinking of our income, we are entitled to distinguish between what we spend upon ourselves and what we devote to the service of others. We can leave the latter aside for the moment; it is what we use for ourselves and our families, for food, rent, pleasures, education, inspiration, that is society's salary to us for personal services rendered. If we are not worth that before the bar of our consciences, there is nothing for us but to curtail our ex-

penses. To spend more than one really earns is just thieving, and it must be labelled by its proper name. No law may lay its hand upon us, and hale us to a court, and place us behind prison bars with striped clothing; but the stripes are there in the eyes of a just God, and will more and more appear to the eyes of the enlightened consciences of men.

What we set aside for gifts to public causes is society's trust to our wisdom and conscience to expend in its name, and in God's name, from whom society's wealth comes. It behooves us to look carefully at the sources of this wealth. No Christian wishes to be generous with money that has been gained by underpaying the labour of those who produced it, or by selling goods of a character or at a price that made their sale no genuine public service. Under present circumstances conscience has to function at long range, and go far afield to post itself upon the conditions under which wealth is produced. It does not matter whether we measure our income in millions or in a very few dollars, we cannot escape the obligation of inquiring how it is created. Thou shalt not steal, even when the theft is unintentional; and no

sanctification of money by its dedication to the holiest uses can remove the social wrong of its unjust acquisition.

In the gifts which a Christian makes out of that which is his own by God's gift through society, he has the final perfecting of his character through his possessions. That is a striking saying of our Lord's, "Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles." In a world as yet so imperfect as ours no money is gained in entire brotherliness; the best business is doubtless harsh and unkind to someone, so that its earnings may be called "mammon of unrighteousness." Christ bids us take it and employ it to make friends, to establish relations of helpfulness between ourselves and those who need what we have; and adds that these relations will persist in the final and lasting order of things. We began by insisting that property was essential for developing personality; here Christ is pleading that we shall turn property into personal relations, for people last, while things perish. We grow our characters not in contact with things but with other

men; property becomes a means of enlarging ourselves only as it makes those selves touch helpfully other selves.

Into what sort of friendships are we putting our mammon of unrighteousness? There is a friendship for men that expresses itself in kindness for their bodies; and Christians will certainly not be slower than others to give to relieve the physical wants of the hungry and the sick. There is a still higher friendship with them that brings us into touch with their minds; and Christians have not been remiss in giving liberally to the institutions that educate and train intelligence and skill, or that supply wholesome pleasures. But we must recognise to-day that there are many persons without distinctive Christian convictions who are willing to be friends of the bodies and minds of their brethren, but who will go no farther—possibly because they are not certain of anything more within themselves that they can offer in friendship. This leaves us, believers in the faith of Jesus, with a special duty to befriend the spirits, the consciences of our brethren. We should not be content to see them comfortable and clever, but no more;

healthy in body and rich in intellect, but paupers in character. We must present ourselves to be friends of their faith by dedicating our gifts that none of God's children, here at our side in our own land or at the ends of the earth, shall be strangers to our most enriching Friend. It is as Christ's mutual friends that we shall come closest to each other and go most deeply into each other's hearts. And in such friendship, whether we see each other face to face in the flesh or not, we are already sharing eternal tabernacles, abiding together in the secret place of the Most High, and occupying mansions in the one Father's everlasting house.

# THE NINTH COMMANDMENT

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Exodus xx:16: *"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."*

Every community has to take measures to insure the truthfulness of witnesses before its courts, and perjury is everywhere punished among civilised men. One of Israel's codes contains the following enactment: "If the witness be a false witness, and have testified falsely against his brother; then shall ye do unto him as he had thought to do unto his brother; so shalt thou put away evil from the midst of thee. And those that remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil in the midst of thee. And thine eye shall not pity; life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot." It sounds harsh; but when one thinks of the frightful rôle in the world's history played by lying informers, and of the absolute necessity of truthfulness in testimony if human justice is to be adminis-

tered, one cannot help admiring this sincere attempt to root out false witness.

Every court of law is but a small organised division of the great tribunal of public opinion, that world-court to which a few weeks ago President Wilson referred for accurate assessment the conflicting protests of Belgians and Germans in the present war. And in this court every one of us is constantly at the bar, on the witness stand, and upon the bench; at the same time on trial, testifying and judging. Every expression of our opinion of other people is testimony, and must be as conscientiously given as the statements we are prepared to make under oath.

The Bible is primarily interested in character, and the decisions of this court of public opinion not only register but mould character. The name men give us is something to which instinctively we live up or down; few persons are very much better or worse than they are expected to be. Zacchaeus was labelled grasping and dishonest by his fellow-townsmen in Jericho, and he fulfilled their anticipations; he was treated as a son of Abraham by Jesus, and responded to that faith. To injure a man's

reputation is to rob him not only of his position in the minds of others, but of his own stimulus to well-doing.

And further every witness before this court is himself on trial, and his evidence concerning others is a verdict which he passes upon himself. What we see in men, what we draw out of them, what we say of them, is a very telling indication of what we are. The thoughts we cherish and the words we utter are all the while making us, so that our witness about others affects not them only, but ourselves.

No wonder, then, that the Bible takes up this question of our talk about one another time and again in the most specific and definite ways. One psalmist asks the question, Who shall dwell with God? and answers among other things, "He that slandereth not with his tongue." Just before he has said, "He that speaketh truth in his heart," so that right *thoughts* and *feelings,* as well as just words about others are in his mind. Slander, in the New Testament, goes by the suggestive Greek word, "back-biting"; it consists in saying about others what one dares not say to them. Di-

ogenes, being asked what bit sorest, answered "Of wildbeasts the back-biter, of tame the flatterer." Slander and flattery go together; he who overpraises to one's face is likely to underrate out of earshot; both are forms of false witness against one's neighbour.

And the Bible has much to say of that common form of slander that we call gossip. One of the oldest codes enacts this law: "Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people." George Meredith has said that gossip is a beast of prey that does not wait for the death of the creature it devours. It is a very prevalent form of murder; there are many conversations like that reported in Pope's *Rape of the Lock,* where "at every word a reputation dies." Mrs. Grundy lives on from generation to generation; she is still the chief talker in most social meetings, be they conversations from the fire-escapes in tenements or in the most select drawing-rooms; and she appears perhaps as frequently in trousers as in petticoats. Omit the personalities from the talk of most of us, and what would be left? The *Book of Proverbs* calls the gossip by the suggestive name of "the whis-

perer." His words are "dainty morsels," for men find them appetising; and though they are "soft" (for the Hebrew word for "dainty" means "soft"), they have a most penetrating way of getting into the very centre of our minds where they lodge—"they go down into the innermost parts."

It takes two both to gossip and to flatter, and the listener is as culpable as the talker. "Take heed how ye hear," said Jesus. We often blame other men's tongues when the condemnation belongs equally to our own ears. We get what we are interested in when we converse, or we soon find a way of stopping or changing the conversation. What others think of saying to us is a fairly accurate measure of the impression we have made upon them. Most of us are greedy for praise, and clumsily or deftly (for skill in the art varies) fish for compliments, and draw men on to false witness.

> The wisest of the wise
> Listen to pretty lies,
> And love to hear 'em told.
> Doubt not that Solomon

Listened to many a one,
Some in his youth, and more when he grew old.

If people gossip to us, let us search and try our hearts. It takes no skill to show when one is bored; and if gossip and flattery do not bore us, we are radically diseased and need nothing less than a new heart and a right spirit.

It is surprising how many of us fall into the habit of "running down" other people. It is a cheap and easy way of ministering to our own vanity. To belittle others seems relatively to exalt us. Most of us are aware of being inconspicuous nobodies; we know that we are very little people—pigmies in ability and puny in character. It is a hard and painful process to force ourselves to grow; it is much simpler to attempt to reduce others to our dimensions; and we do it all the time. If someone is being heartily praised, we break in with our "Yes, but—." The weak spots in others have a fatal fascination for us; our eyes are glued to them. Of the whole Achilles we notice only the heel. Tennyson has sketched the typical "runner down" in Vivien, who contributed not

a little to the breaking up of the Round Table. She

> "let her tongue
> Rage like a fire among the noblest names,
> Polluting and imputing her whole self,
> Defaming and defacing till she left
> Not even Lancelot brave nor Galahad clean."

One of the most difficult clauses for most of us in the Thirteenth Chapter of *First Corinthians* runs: "Love thinketh," that is *"imputeth* no evil."

Another phase of false witness against which the Bible warns is connected with controversy. The *Book of Proverbs* again and again links a fool with contention. It seems to be next to impossible to disagree with others and do justice to them. The mere fact that they differ from us argues to our conceit that there must be something wrong either with their brains or their consciences, or oftener with both. It is very rare that a serious difference of opinion does not bring with it personal depreciation. Think of those whose views we do not like, and how many of them do we honestly admire? And particularly when our own

reasoning is not very strong, we find ourselves tempted to disparage our opponents. Richard Hooker, who in the midst of a contentious age won for himself the adjective, "the judicious Hooker," in replying to one of his disputants says: "Your next argument consists of railing and of reason; to your railing I say nothing; to your reasons I say what follows." And on another occasion he made the statement: "There will come a time when three words uttered with charity and meekness shall receive a more blessed reward than three thousand volumes written with disdainful sharpness of wit." How seldom one picks up a pamphlet or a newspaper article combating opinions which does not abuse those who hold them! Sometimes the abuse is clever; it makes the adversary appear ridiculous; but it is not just; it is false witness. After John Wesley had read a tract upon an interpretation of the astronomy in the early chapters of *Genesis,* he entered in his *Journal:* "Is it well thus to run down all that differ from us? Dr. Pye is an ingenious man, but so is Dr. Robinson also; so are twenty more, although they understand Moses in a quite different manner."

There must be controversies; it is only through the friction of intellects that we light the torch of truth. Occasions occur when we have to contend with all our mental might for our convictions. But at such times we need to say to ourselves most emphatically: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." We are bidden speak the truth in love; and if we cannot speak it in love, we must keep silent. Truth spoken in any other way is unconvincing.

The Bible cautions those whose sense of humour may lead them too far in playing with the truth about other people. "As a madman who casteth firebrands, arrows and death, so is the man that deceiveth his neighbour and saith, Am I not in sport?" Truth about men is so sacred that it is irreverent to trifle with it, exactly as we shrink from joking in the things we say about God. In the good stories which we tell concerning other people, we have to check ourselves and be sure that there is no malice in them. By no means all humour is entirely kind; and while many men are helped by being laughed at, love, and only love, can laugh helpfully.

And this brings us to Jesus' reinterpretation of this ancient commandment. "Judge not," He said, "that ye be not judged." In our more thoughtful moods it may seem strange that He had to say, "Judge not." There is scarcely anything which we men are less fitted to do. To the end the closest of us remain comparative strangers to each other. We know next to nothing of the real significance of the lives that are lived at our side. Some of you may have read the striking description Heine gives of the life of Immanuel Kant in the old city of Koenigsberg: "He lived an abstract, mechanical, old-bachelor existence, in a quiet remote street. I do not believe that the great cathedral-clock of that city accomplished its day's work in a less passionate and more regular way than its countryman, Immanuel Kant. Rising from bed, coffee-drinking, writing, lecturing, eating, walking, everything had its fixed time; and the neighbours knew that it must be exactly half-past four when they saw Professor Kant in his grey coat, with his cane in his hand, step out of his house door, and move toward the little lime-tree avenue, which is named after him—the Professor's Walk.

Eight times he walked up and down that walk at every season of the year, and when the weather was bad, or the grey clouds threatened rain, his servant, old Lampe, was seen anxiously following him with a large umbrella under his arm, like an image of Providence. Strange contrast between the outer life of the man and his world-destroying thought! Of a truth, if the citizens of Koenigsberg had had any inkling of that thought they would have shuddered before him as before an executioner. But the good people saw nothing in him but a professor of philosophy, and when he passed at the appointed hour they gave him friendly greetings—and set their watches." And we know as little of the inner life of those of whom day after day we catch sight and form our superficial judgments.

Jesus was not forbidding such superficial judgments. He knew that so long as men live together they must form opinions of one another. We have to "size up" men's abilities, dispositions, trustworthiness, in connection with the positions they fill. We have to estimate their value as friends. We have to make up our minds how they will feel or think about

this, that or the other matter, in which we have dealings with them. Life is a constant series of such judgments. Jesus judged the men whom he chose to be His followers; and the amazing thing is that He valued them so highly. Recall His expectations of Simon Peter—"on this rock"; of James and John—"the cup that I drink, ye shall drink"; even of Judas Iscariot, for we have every reason to suppose that he, too, was selected in the faith that he would be loyal. "Love believeth all things, hopeth all things." And when Jesus said, "Judge not," He was speaking to would-be good men, and warning them against what is perhaps the commonest and worst fault of good people—allowing themselves to become censorious and to undervalue men and women.

A sincerely good man, whose long public life constantly forced him to form judgments of other men—Mr. Gladstone—once wrote: "Nothing grows upon me so much with lengthening life as the sense of the difficulties, or rather the impossibilities, with which we are beset whenever we attempt to take to ourselves the functions of the Eternal Judge (except in reference to ourselves where judg-

ment is committed to us), and to form any accurate idea of relative merit and demerit, good and evil, in actions. The shades of the rainbow are not so nice, and the sands of the seashore are not such a multitude, as are all the subtle, shifting, blending, forms of thought and of circumstance that go to determine the character of us and our acts." And he adds, "But there is One that seeth plainly and judgeth righteously." The difficulty is that we are all the while usurping God's place, and passing judgments on those whom we are not called on to justify or condemn. Any unnecessary expressions of opinion about other people are to be avoided as perilous infringements on God's prerogative.

And it is here that good people are so often very far from good. Maurice once wrote to his mother: "Of all spirits I believe the spirit of judging is the worst, and it has had the rule of me I cannot tell you how dreadfully and how long. Looking in other people for the faults which I had a secret consciousness were in myself, where I should have been sure to find them all; this, I find, has more hindered my progress in love and gentleness and

sympathy than all things else. I never knew what the words 'Judge not that ye be not judged' meant before; now they seem to me some of the most awful, necessary and beautiful in the whole Word of God." A recent novelist has described one of her characters as follows: "Discrimination was the note of her being. For every Christian some Christian precepts are obsolete. For Lady Lucy that which runs, 'Judge not,' had never been alive."

And when circumstances compel us to form and express judgments about other people, we must clearly recall that in our limited human way we are attempting one of God's functions, and must remind ourselves how our Father judges. In Luke's account of Jesus' words the sequence runs: "Be ye merciful even as your Father is merciful. And judge not." The critical attitude is essentially ungodlike. It is worth remembering that so keen an analyst of character as Shakespeare puts upon the lips of his worst villain, Iago, the sentence: "I am nothing if not critical." And the only cure for the critical spirit is a very large dose of love. We have to discriminate or we have no taste, but it must be love's discrimination. Landor

once, repenting of some censures he had passed on Milton, said to Southey, "Are we not somewhat like two little beggar-boys who, forgetting that they are in tatters, sit noticing a few stains and rents in their father's raiment?" "But," replied Southey, *"they love him."* And love qualifies us, as it qualifies our God, for judging, where we must judge. "Nothing," says Faber, the hymn-writer and good physician of souls, "deepens the mind so much as the habit of charity. Charity cannot feed on surfaces. Its instinct always is to go deeper. Roots are its natural food."

And this explains why Jesus added: "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged." It is not that God in an arbitrary fashion will pay us for being charitable in our opinions with an equal charitableness in judging us; but that the constant use of love in our estimates of others will actually alter us, deepen our natures, broaden our sympathies, feed us with divine impulses, and develop in us godlike characters that cannot be condemned. "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again," because the measure we use becomes our capacity, and God is always giving us just

as much as we can contain. To be generous in our opinions of others is to enlarge our own natures to receive the generosity of God; to forgive is to have room for the inflow of His forgiveness, to judge with His love is to be capable of taking in His fulness and becoming like Him who cannot be harshly judged.

Then Jesus adds the saying about first casting out the beam from our own eye before we can look at the mote in our brother's eye. In other words, be strict with yourself and you will be lenient in your judgment of others. Most critical persons are hypocritical; they overrate themselves and then underrate others. There is a very deceptive modesty that takes the form of running ourselves down in our talk with others in order to have them exalt us in reply, and tickle our vanity. All talk about our own merit or demerit, save to God, is probably to be avoided; but that does not mean that we are not to take ourselves in hand and give ourselves a rigid and searching scrutiny. "Why considerest not thou the beam that is in thine own eye?" said Jesus. It is to be carefully considered, scanned, hated, cast out, however painful the operation of re-

moval is. Severity with self is the only safeguard of love with others.

And there is still one other enlargement of the meaning of this ancient commandment which we owe to Jesus. Who is the "neighbour" against whom we are forbid to bear false witness? Jesus called "neighbour" anyone who needed what He had to bestow. It is always easier to undervalue those we have never seen than those who are close at hand. The death of a thousand soldiers in Poland or at Tsing Tao means less to us than a single life lost on our own subway. Our valuations vary inversely with the distance of the person we are valuing. We feel pained that some relative or friend is without the stimulus of our Christian faith; we sometimes feel that a Chinaman or a Hindu can get on with religious inspirations considerably less. It is the commonest thing to hear nominal Christians declaring that other faiths (of which usually they know very little) are quite good enough for the inhabitants of Asia or Africa, while they consider the faith of Christ none too good for them and theirs. It is a pathetic form of bearing false witness against our neighbour. What does

Christ, sincerely accepted, make out of even semi-civilised men in a single generation? What are the results of Christianity in the second and third generations? Let us be just. We have no occasion to depreciate the religious and moral inspirations given by other faiths; we are not likely to overestimate the worth of such unused Christianity as permits its nominal devotees to slaughter each other; but we must not be unfair in our judgments of the capacities of races as yet unchristianized; and above all we must not be unjust to the transforming influence of Him, whom we call our Saviour. What are other men to us Christians—men at our side, men in the ends of the earth? Brethren, for whose sake Christ died. What is Christ to us? Each must answer out of his own experience. Not to believe that all men are capable of attaining sonship with God through Him, and that He is able to supply their every need out of His fulness, is the most serious and most thoroughly unchristian form of bearing false witness against both our earthly and our Heavenly neighbour.

# THE TENTH COMMANDMENT

# THE TENTH COMMANDMENT

Exodus xx:17: *"Thou shalt not covet anything that is thy neighbour's."*

The Ten Commandments are represented as spoken at Sinai to tribesmen on the point of invading the land of Canaan and capturing the towns, vineyards and possessions of its inhabitants. One wonders that it never occurred to any of them that this injunction, "Thou shalt not covet," had an immediate application to their greedy desire to expropriate the Canaanites. A Hebrew would have answered promptly that the dwellers in Canaan were not neighbours; only fellow-Israelites were neighbours. But unhappily, Christians, to whom in theory all men are neighbours, have not felt that this commandment forbade a nation coveting the territory, or trade, or prestige of another. Some "place in the sun" which is occupied by a neighbour people has been and still is the underlying motive that sends a nation to war. So universally has a stronger people

dispossessed a weaker, a civilised nation used its superior intelligence and improved appliances of fighting to seize the lands of a less civilised, a vigorous race mastered a decadent or backward race, that we are at a loss to fancy how otherwise the world's history might have run its course. Coveting has been taken for granted; it has been labelled national ambition, and held up as part of the creed of every patriot. It has been assumed that a country was justified in wanting and in taking every square inch of the earth's surface over which it could plant its flag. Whatever may be said to condone the actions of the past, the awakened conscience of to-day will surely insist that a land, be it the Philippines, or India, or Korea, or Belgium, or Bohemia, or Poland, or any other country with a national consciousness, belongs to its own inhabitants. It may not yet be ready to keep itself unhelped, but it must not be held by another land against its own will and used for another's interest. Only as this ancient commandment, "Thou shalt not covet anything that is thy neighbour's" is graven on the hearts of nations have we a lasting basis for peace. No patriotism

without it is Christian, or, for that matter, even truly Jewish, according to an international application of the Decalogue. No satisfactory world-tribunal will be erected to adjudicate the differences of nations until the social conscience of the represented powers feels the imperative of this ancient moral principle.

While the Israelites did not apply this commandment to their dealings with other peoples, the Bible is full of instances of individuals who are censured for breaking it—Achan with the Babylonish mantle, the shekels of silver and the wedge of gold among the booty of Jericho, David with Bethsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, Ahab with Naboth's vineyard, and a host more. But it leaves us to define for ourselves what coveting is forbidden. "Covet earnestly," it bids us, "the best gifts." How shall we distinguish the two kinds of coveting—self-seeking from laudable ambition?

This commandment has been used to stifle social restlessness. It has been interpreted to mean that a man must be content with what he and his already possess; they are not to de-

sire the advantages and comforts of the more fortunately circumstanced. This is a very convenient application for the "haves," but hardly satisfactory to the "have-nots." We must recall that the Bible regards everything as primarily family property, and that the individual's ownership is conditioned upon the judgment of the family that he renders a commensurate service, or that he needs his portion for his good. One may rightly covet for the disinherited a larger share in the household's goods, and for some of the wealthy a fuller bearing of the household's burdens. Such social coveting is nothing but love. But the personal desire of some individual to take from another that which he now owns and make it his own is never a worthy aim. No man is entitled to set up his private opinion that it would be better for him to have that which is now another man's, and better for the other man to be without it. These are social judgments, which the community, not individuals, is entitled to pronounce. What any man lawfully holds, he holds from the community under God; if the community takes it from him—well and good; if some private

person casts longing eyes upon it and wants it for himself, that is coveting a neighbour's possessions.

And the Bible shows us in a hundred ways how readily men set their hearts on that which is another's, and how by so doing we degrade ourselves. Time and again it links covetousness with uncleanness. In the commandment itself wanting a neighbour's house or ox is set side by side with wanting his wife. We condemn the foul desire of the would-be adulterer; and the Bible tries to make us feel the foulness of all desires for that which belongs to others.

St. Paul's letters repeatedly contain lists that run: "Fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and *covetousness;*" "no fornicator, nor unclean person, nor *covetous* man." There is a genuine kinship between these vices. In the chronology of morals it often happens that the licentious young man becomes in middle age the money lover; covetousness has been called "promoted vice, lust superannuated." The desire to possess and enjoy what is another's is the same dirty desire whether its object be another man's wife, or his posi-

tion, his fortune, his reputation, his business.

And it is here that competition is most clearly seen as an immoral motive. Men may vie with each other for business efficiency; that is coveting earnestly the best gifts. Rivalry between workmen as to who can do the better job, or finish it more rapidly, is an entirely legitimate and praiseworthy rivalry. Firms may contend in the endeavour to render the community better service, and that is love's contest. But the moment a workman deliberately sets out so to fulfil his work that he supplants some other workman, or a firm consciously attempts to get the customers of another firm, unclean covetousness enters and degrades the motive. In commercial competition the Christian must distinguish sharply between coveting the best gifts with which to serve and coveting that which is a neighbour's.

The great painters and poets have confirmed the Bible's feeling that covetousness is unclean. Giotto, for instance, paints Envy as a figure of a woman partially bestialised with fingers terminating in claws; and in the *Faerie Queene* Spenser tells how

"Malicious Envy rode
Upon a ravenous wolfe, and still did chaw
Between his cankered teeth a venomous tode,
That all the poison ran about his jaw.
All in a kirtle of discolored say (serge)
He clothed was, ypainted full of eies,
And in his bosom secretely there lay
An hateful snake, the which his tail uptyes
In many folds, and mortal sting implyes."

There is something essentially sub-human in setting longing eyes on that which is somebody else's; it is brute-like to do that.

This commandment is the climax of the law; it goes deeper than any of the other commandments. Jesus had to take some of the others and deepen them for His disciples in order that they might feel that a hateful feeling was murder and a lustful thought adultery; but He did not need to touch this commandment. It went down of itself into men's secret thoughts and feelings; they might refrain from theft or uncleanness; but if the covetous desire was there, they were condemned. "Thou shalt not covet anything that is thy neighbour's" is simply the negative of "thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

And it was the searching character of this

commandment that made it play a significant rôle in one of the greatest religious experiences in the Bible. Saul of Tarsus, the devout boy, brought up in the strict faith and morals of his fathers, and surpassing his fellow students in Gamaliel's classroom in earnestness, could listen to all the other nine commandments with his withers unwrung; but the tenth probed far into his conscience and left him writhing. "The law said, 'Thou shalt not covet,' " he tells us in a frank chapter of autobiography, "and sin wrought in me all manner of coveting." One cannot help wishing that he had not been so general, but had drawn aside the veil of reticence and told us specifically what he longed after. It is not likely to have been money, for his chosen career was not that of a wealth-seeker; but money can do so many fine things that Saul may have wished for a fortune. It may have been sensual passion; and this will account for his strong words about buffeting his body and keeping it under. There is a crater of emotion in this man that becomes active in his Christian days in glowing devotion and fiery indignation; and it may easily have been volcanic with other passions

at an earlier period. Or it may have been the much more spiritual lust for reputation and influence and power. Pride and coveting are close kin; and this brilliant student with great gifts of leadership and utterance must have had no small battle with self-conceit and the desire to be in the prominent places held by others. Perhaps his phrase, "all manner of coveting," is meant to cover his desire always to be in the first place of recognition and praise and influence, and the jealous chafing of his spirit when others were more thought of and spoken about and followed. And it was his inability to cope with covetousness that shipwrecked his sincere attempt to work out his own righteousness. He thought he was reasonably successful with the other commandments; but with his own feelings, longings, ambitions, he could do nothing. "When the commandment came, sin revived, and I died."

How thankful we must ever be for this honest man's confession of his mastering difficulty! How close he comes to us all! "All manner of coveting"—let conscience work for a moment and recall how we craved the admiring words spoken to another, and envied

his charm, his ability, his capacity for evoking affection; how we set our heart on the comforts, or the social prestige, or the personal popularity we saw someone else enjoying, and begrudged them to him in our selfish wish to have them for ourselves; how we have actually schemed to get ahead of another in a friend's trust or esteem, in an official position, in a lucrative opportunity. There is hardly a business office that does not witness coveting—one man wishing himself in another's shoes; or a home that does not see a covetous love wishing its dear ones to outdistance in favour or power some other's beloved; or a meeting where a covetous desire to outshine another is not evident in the course of one or a dozen persons present; or a social entertainment that does not display a covetous craving for attention or applause or honour. "All manner of coveting"—one need not specify, for conscience will itemise the details for every one of us. There is always someone sufficiently near us in ability or social position or similarity of gifts to constitute him a rival, and provoke the green-eyed monster within us. "Sin revived, and I died."

And to Paul in his extremity came One whose outstanding distinction lay in having no place whatsoever for covetousness, One who was self-emptied; and in trustful loyalty to Him Paul became alive. But he hardly knew himself; it was not he that lived; he could not recognise himself with covetousness no longer dominant; it was the uncoveting Christ alive in him.

Although so free from personal desires that, as one sympathetic interpreter tells us, the Prince of this world found nothing in Him, Jesus knew the perils of acquisitiveness in His brethren. What a man wants, He felt, he serves. He saw men wanting money, wanting it no doubt for a great many mixed motives, lofty and base, just as men want it today; and that desire made them in His eyes worshippers of mammon. With fine power of analysis He unbared the subtle results that followed in character: a hardening, for a successful money-maker has to suppress his finer sympathies, and the result is a Dives living sumptuously while a Lazarus, neglected, lies not far away; a self-sufficiency, for money can do so many things that its possessors uncon-

sciously settle down with a comfortable sense of security—"Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years;" a self-indulgence, because even the most generous of well-to-do persons has an almost overwhelming temptation to be kind to himself, what would be luxury in others appears ordinary avoidance of meanness in him, and everything in men's expectation says to him: "take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." "How hardly shall they that have riches," said the frankest and most plain-spoken of masters, "enter the Kingdom of heaven." Fine as may be the aims to which we would put wealth, its possessor must realise that he owns perilous stuff; in a thousand ways it may ruin him. And to long for money, high as is the purpose in which we wish to employ it, is a most dangerous longing. "The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil," says the truest interpreter of the Lord's mind.

But it is also just to remember that while Jesus spoke of money as unrighteous mammon,—"unrighteous", perhaps, because in a world so unlovingly ordered as ours its acquisition and possession can hardly fail to be without injustice to someone, or because it is so

likely to injure its owner—He also insisted that it had a very important moral bearing. "If, therefore, ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" The proper handling of money is an essential part of man's education. Sir Henry Taylor, in his *Notes on Life,* has written: "So manifold are the bearings of money upon the lives and characters of mankind, that an insight which should search out the life of a man in his pecuniary relations would penetrate into almost every cranny of his nature. He who knows, like St. Paul, how to spare and how to abound, has a great knowledge; for if we take account of all the virtues with which money is mixed up—honesty, justice, generosity, charity, frugality, forethought, self-sacrifice, and of their correlative vices, it is a knowledge which goes near to cover the length and breadth of humanity, and a right measure in getting, saving, spending, giving, taking, lending, borrowing, and bequeathing, would almost argue a perfect man." Small wonder, then, that in Jesus' judgment a right handling of money is a conclusive test of fitness for the possession of true riches.

And in Jesus' mind this Tenth Commandment was indissolubly connected with the First, so that the Decalogue for Him began and ended on the same note. A man whose heart was set on acquiring wealth, no matter what lofty purpose he had in mind for it, was putting another god up beside the living Father on the throne of his life. He was giving something else a consideration, a trust, a service, that belonged to God alone. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." And in entire accord with the Master, Paul constantly calls a covetous man an idolater.

We are back, then, where we started—to Luther's definition of what it means to have a God: "Whatever thy heart clings to and relies on, that is properly thy God." Our danger lies in putting things or people in God's place, longing for and pinning our faith to something less than the Most High. We have to remind ourselves again and again how meagre was the outfit of Jesus—He had practically nothing but a conviction and a character; and how entirely sufficient that outfit proved. To be sure He did not hesitate to employ everything that happened to be at His

disposal, but He was always detached from it; His heart was never set on it as indispensable. If someone invited Him to a banquet He accepted, and enjoyed so heartily what was offered Him that critics called Him gluttonous and winebibber. If art could make His message carry, He took pains to be supremely artistic, and clothed His thought in phrases of undying beauty. If the affection and loyalty of men could further His cause, He used to the full the friendship of a Peter, an Andrew, a John. But He longed for nothing as essential to His purpose and life. If men's hospitality turned to rejection and the tragic prosecution of the last days, if He could no longer get a hearing for His most beautiful parable and was reduced to silence, if one disciple turned traitor and the rest ran away, there was no diminution in His confidence, no regretful longing for other means to accomplish His end, but complete contentment with the stern and awful necessity of enduring the cross. If He had the righteous and loving God, that seemed to fill His every need. The only covetous cry was the prayer for Him: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

"Ye cannot serve God and . . ." To have God means that God has all of us. Coveting anything apart from Him is to lose Him. Honesty compels most of us to admit that we are not conscious, as Jesus was, of this most real reinforcement of ourselves from outside. God is to us an idea rather than a factor, a force. Jesus would tell us that covetousness, a divided heart, doomed us to spiritual numbness and rendered God beyond our feeling. We want the righteous God, and at the same time we want our own way; we want our Father's "well done", and we want to stand in with our neighbours; we want to do His will, and we want to get on in the world; we want to spend and be spent for the Kingdom, and we want to be reasonably comfortable and amused while we are doing it. James would call us "double-minded," and Jesus would explain the doubleness by two deities—God and mammon.

If we covet God, He must be coveted with our entire natures in order to be had. There can be no side desires; the whole current of our being must set just one way. An occasional wistfulness for higher things, a stray

trust in love, a partial resolve to seek righteousness, a fitful aspiration for justice, a thought once in a while of the will of the Most High—these will never give us God.

> Night sucks them down, the tribute of the pit,
> Whose names, half-entered in the book of life,
> Were God's desire at noon.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all" or there is some undevoted particle of the self coveting somewhat discordant with God, who is love; and that is idolatry. To give one's whole self to Him with the completeness of Jesus' consecration is so to find God, and to be satisfied in Him, that there is no fractional longing left to covet aught unrelated with His will. God is all in all. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And there is none upon earth I desire besides Thee."

But this is only to face ourselves with the problem that baffled Saul of Tarsus. How is it in our power to concentrate our love and leave no fractional desires straying off on unhallowed ends? Jesus Christ proved the solution of Saul's problem. After the spell of His mastering Personality had been cast over

him, Paul said, "One thing I do," "To me to live is Christ." God, when He comes to us through the Figure of Jesus, claims and captures as much as in us is. Jesus engrosses a whole man, fills the entire horizon. We covet His life with God, His life with men, His gifts. And we are so covetous of Him that we covet nothing else.

Our safety from all other coveting lies in constantly looking off to Him, and letting Him draw out our every desire and confidence and fasten them on Himself.

> "Thou, O Christ, art all I want;
> More than all in Thee I find."

Then God through Him possesses us entirely, and we seek Him with our whole hearts, and find Him. "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul"; "I have no good beyond Thee."

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